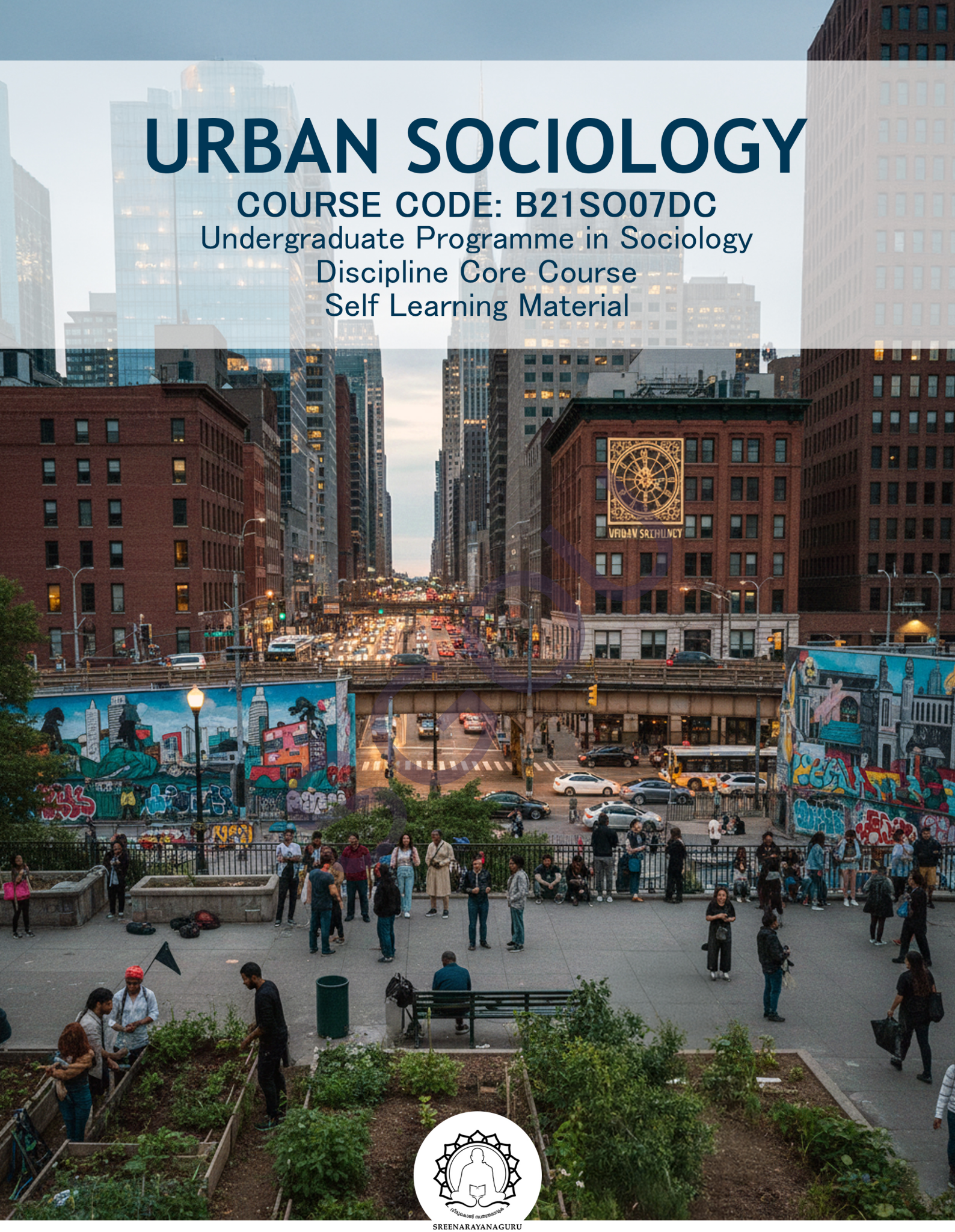
URBAN SOCIOLOGY

COURSE CODE: B21SO07DC

Undergraduate Programme in Sociology

Discipline Core Course

Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Urban Sociology

Course Code: B21SO07DC

Semester - VI

Discipline Core Course
Undergraduate Programme in Sociology
Self Learning Material

(With Model Question Paper Sets)

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The University aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The UG programme in Sociology is designed as a coherent set of academic learning modules that generate interest in dissecting the social engineering process. Both theory and practice are covered using the most advanced tools in sociological analysis. Care has been taken to ensure a chronological progression in understanding the discipline. The curriculum provides adequate space for a linear journey through the historical concepts in sociology, catering to the needs of aspirants for the competitive examination as well. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.

Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V.P.

01-01-2026

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BLOCK

Introduction to Urban Sociology

UNIT 1

Origin and Scope of Urban Sociology

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- describe the origin and historical development of Urban Sociology with reference to the Chicago School
- explain the nature and scope of Urban Sociology in understanding urban life and social relationships
- analyse the contributions of the Chicago School in shaping theoretical and methodological approaches in Urban Sociology

Prerequisite

Imagine you are standing in the middle of a busy city street in the 1920s. Tall buildings surround you, trams clatter by, street vendors shout their prices, and people from different cultures speak different languages. It's exciting… but also a little overwhelming, right? Back then, in the United States, especially in Chicago, this fast-paced urban life was new for many. Cities were growing rapidly because of industrialisation, migration, and immigration. People came seeking jobs, better living conditions, and new opportunities. But with this growth came problems: overcrowding, crime, poverty, and social tensions. A group of sociologists at the University of Chicago decided to study these changes closely. They didn't just sit in offices reading books; they went into the streets, visited neighbourhoods, spoke to people, and observed life firsthand. This group became famous as the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, marking the origin and development of Urban Sociology as they studied real-life issues like migration, poverty, and neighbourhood life, using the city as their "living laboratory."

The Chicago School's work raised important questions: How do cities change people's lives? Why do different communities form in certain areas? What causes urban

problems, and how can we solve them? Through their fieldwork and observations, they developed Urban Sociology, a branch of sociology focused on cities, urban life, and the complex social systems within them. The nature of Urban Sociology is about understanding urban living: how people connect, how they face challenges, and how the city itself evolves over time. Its scope covers everything from studying urban communities and social issues like unemployment, housing, and pollution, to designing better cities for the future. In other words, Urban Sociology allows us to see cities not just as clusters of buildings and roads, but as living, breathing organisms shaped by human interactions.

Keywords

Folk, Urban, Urbanisation, Human ecology, Urbanism, Community

Discussion

1.1.1 Etymology of the term 'Urban'

The words "urban" and "urbane" both come from the Latin word "urbanus," which means "belonging to a city." These two words were initially used with similar meanings; however, over time, they developed different applications. The word "urbane" entered English through the French language (as "urbain") and still follows the French pronunciation. Today, "urbane" is used to describe someone who is refined, polite, and elegant. These qualities were often associated with people living in cities, rather than those in rural areas. On the other hand, "urban" simply refers to something related to a city or town and is used in contrast to rural or village life. A person who lives in a village is often referred to as "folk" while someone who lives in a city is known as an "urbanite." Understanding the meanings of "urban" and "urbane" helps us see how language reflects social ideas about city life and manners.

1.1.2 Early Developments in Urban Sociology

Have you ever wondered why people are so fascinated by cities? This interest in cities is not something new; it has existed for thousands of years, ever since the first cities were formed. People across different cultures and times have always been curious about city life, contemplating its positive and negative aspects. This fascination can be seen not only in stories and sayings passed down by common people but also in the ideas of great thinkers and leaders from various civilisations.

Whether it is Jewish, Greek (Hellenistic), Roman, Christian, Indian, Chinese, or Islamic civilisations, all have had mixed feelings about cities. On one hand, they admired cities for their power, wealth, and creativity; on the other hand, they were concerned that cities could be morally corrupt and spoil people, unlike the countryside, which was

seen as more honest, simple, and virtuous. Because of this love-hate relationship, many cultures tried to imagine a perfect city, one that would retain the good while avoiding the bad.

Cities first appeared around ten thousand years ago, but the scientific study of cities began only a few hundred years ago. Urban sociology, as a specific field, is even more recent. One of the earliest books ever written about cities was by an Italian named Giovanni Botero. His book was published in 1598 under the title *A Treatise Concerning the Causes of the Magnificence and Greatness of Cities.* Although this work is now mostly seen as a historical curiosity, it demonstrates that interest in city life has deep roots.

From the 17th century onwards, scholars began to study cities more seriously. These included statisticians, economists, population experts, historians, administrators, planners, and social reformers. All contributed valuable insights, and their writings helped shape the foundation of what we now call urban sociology. Early thinkers like Graunt, Ravenstein, Adna Weber, and others explored important topics related to urban life, though their works were not classified as urban sociology at the time.

The real beginnings of urban sociology as a scientific field came in the 20th century. One of the first sociologists to focus on cities was René Maunier. His book, *The Economic Origin and Function of Cities*, published in 1910, approached urban topics primarily from an economic angle. Around the same time, sociologists like Georg Simmel and Max Weber wrote influential works that touched on city life. Simmel's famous essay, *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903), examined how city living affects individual behaviour. Many scholars believe Simmel was the first true urban sociologist because he explored how space, population density, and economic differences shape social behaviour.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several important social studies focused on urban life. For example, Jane Addams' *Hull House Maps and Papers* (1893) and Robert Woods' *The City Wilderness* (1899) provided detailed observations of city communities. In England, Charles Booth's study of London's working class and Rowntree's 1901 study of poverty in York gave a broader picture of urban conditions in industrial cities. These works laid the foundation for more systematic urban studies.

The real breakthrough in urban sociology came with Robert E. Park's article *The City,* published in 1915 in the American Journal of Sociology. Although it did not receive much attention at the time, it introduced important ideas about how cities function socially. Urban sociology gained formal recognition in the U.S. in 1925, when the American Sociological Society dedicated its annual meeting to this topic. That same year, Park, Burgess, and McKenzie published their landmark book *The City*, which is considered a founding text of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology.

1.1.3 Urban Sociology in India

In India, sociology as a subject started much later. As you know, the first sociology department was established in 1920 at the University of Bombay by Patrick Geddes. Between 1914 and 1924, Geddes conducted surveys of about 50 Indian cities and wrote a two-volume report on urban planning for Indore. However, unlike Park and Burgess, Geddes' work did not establish urban sociology in India, partly because sociology itself was a new and developing discipline at the time.

It was not until the 1960s that Indian universities began to seriously consider urban sociology. M.S.A. Rao, a leading Indian sociologist, pointed out two main

reasons for this delay. First, many Indian sociologists believed that the rural-urban divide did not apply as clearly in India as it did in the West, due to India's lower level of urbanisation. Second, they felt that Indian cities and villages were part of the same cultural tradition and not entirely separate ways of life.

In 1953, G.S. Ghurye wrote about Indian cities in the Sociological Bulletin, continuing the early work started by Geddes. Still, as sociologist Satish Saberwal noted in 1977, urban sociology in India had not yet developed clear, guiding theories. While scholars occasionally studied urban issues, the field remained scattered and lacked a strong intellectual foundation.

1.1.4 The Chicago School

Let us start with a simple question: when did cities first appear? Historians believe cities began to form around ten thousand years ago. However, here is something interesting: the scientific study of cities began only a few hundred years ago, and urban sociology, the sociological study of cities, is an even more recent development.

So, where did urban sociology really take shape? The answer lies in America, particularly at the University of Chicago. This university established the first Department of Sociology in 1892, under Albion W. Small, and was home to scholars like W.I. Thomas and George E. Vincent. In the 1920s and 1930s, sociologists in Chicago began studying real-life urban life, how cities grow, how people live in them, and how they interact. This group of thinkers became known as the Chicago School of Sociology.

Why this sudden interest in cities? Consider what was happening at the time. The Industrial Revolution had changed the world. People were moving from villages to cities in huge numbers, seeking jobs in factories. This rapid urbanisation caused major changes in society. Cities grew quickly, and with them came problems like overcrowding, inequality, and cultural differences. Social scientists wanted to understand these changes. That's how urban sociology emerged as a way to study how urban life affects society.

Now, you might wonder: Were only American thinkers involved in this? Not really. Renowned sociologists like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim also studied issues related to urban life. While they didn't create a separate theory of urban sociology, their work—such as Marx's analysis of capitalism, Weber's ideas about rationalisation, and Durkheim's concerns about moral breakdown—reflected what was happening in growing cities. Another key contributor was Georg Simmel, who is often called the father of urban sociology.

But why was Chicago such a key location for this new discipline? Four major reasons can be cited:

1. Industrialisation and commercial growth in Chicago attracted migrants from Europe, including France, Sweden, Germany, and Czechoslovakia.
2. The city became multicultural, multilingual, and had unequal wealth distribution.
3. Between 1898 and 1930, Chicago's population doubled.
4. Different areas of the city grew at different rates, leading to significant changes in its social and spatial organisation.

The Chicago School focused on studying metropolises: large urban centres that play a major role in cultural, political, and economic life. By the 1920s, they identified two main aspects of urban areas:

1. **Spatial aspect:** the physical layout, land use, housing, workplaces, and recreational areas.

2. **Cultural aspect:** the lifestyles, customs, and social standards of residents.

The spatial aspect led to urban ecological studies, which involved mapping physical and social structures, institutions, and populations. Mapping social problems helped city authorities plan services and address issues like crime and suicide, which were often concentrated in certain areas.

Scholars of the Chicago School believed that cities offered a unique opportunity to explore how people live and adapt in complex urban environments. Key thinkers from this school include Robert Ezra Park, Ernest Burgess, and Louis Wirth, each of whom studied different aspects of city life. Their work helped develop many important concepts in urban sociology.

One of their major contributions was the book *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment*, which marked the beginning of their influential research. At the time, the city of Chicago was growing rapidly, making it an ideal place to study modern urban development.

The Chicago School focused on understanding urban life by examining the personal experiences of city residents. According to Michael Dear (2002), their work often explored how individual choices and experiences helped explain larger urban issues, such as city layout, crime, poverty, and racism. Overall, the Chicago School played a key role in shaping urban sociology, introducing important ideas that helped explain how cities grow and how different social areas and lifestyles develop within them.

1.1.4.1 Contributions of the Chicago School

1. Human Ecology Theory: Robert E. Park

Robert E. Park applied ideas from ecology (the study of relationships between organisms and their environment) to the study of cities.

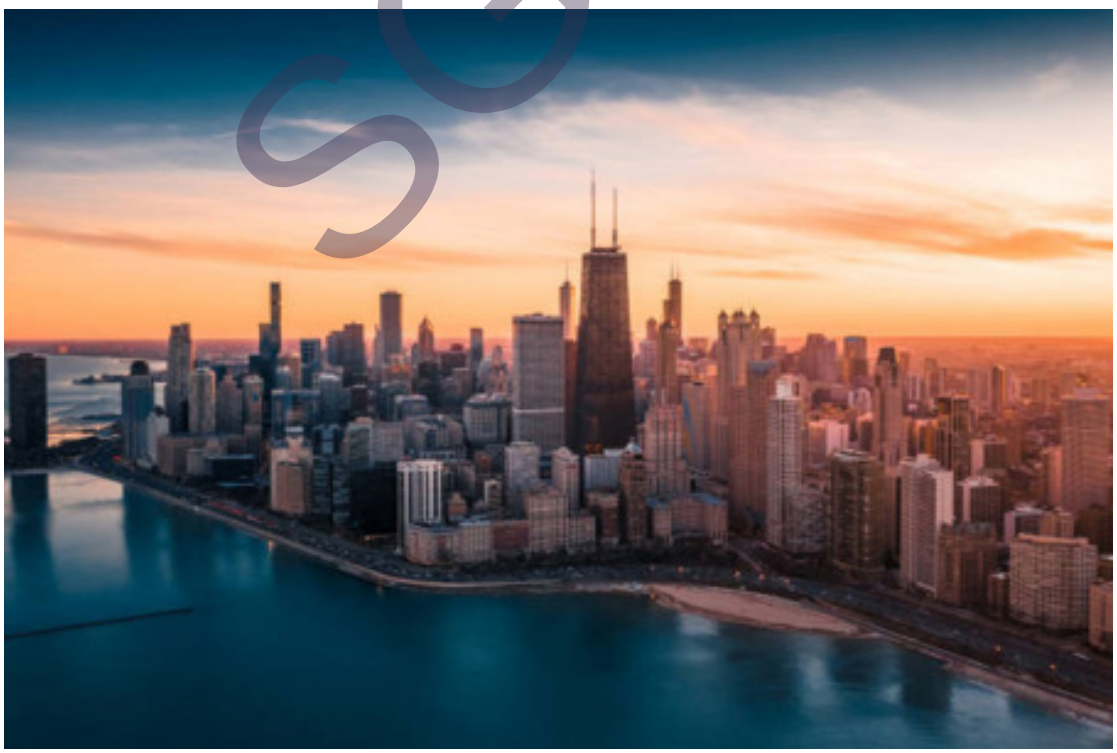

Fig 1.1.1: City of Chicago, USA

- He compared plant communities in nature to "natural areas" in cities, where people with similar backgrounds tend to cluster.

- Each area develops its own functional unity and moral values, making it culturally distinct yet interdependent with other areas.

- Park's theory drew on Durkheim's Division of Labour and Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

He argued that as populations grow and transport systems expand, cities develop specialised economic functions. Competition between individuals and groups shapes the distribution of different social and economic classes in the city. Communities develop in cycles, with periods of stability interrupted by internal or external changes.

2. Urbanism as a Way of Life: Louis Wirth

Louis Wirth focused on the social effects of urban living.

- He argued that larger, denser, and more heterogeneous populations lead to a more urbanised lifestyle.

- Key elements of urbanisation include population size, density, and diversity.

- While cities offer cultural variety, they also create social isolation, weak family ties, and role fragmentation.

- In urban areas, people interact in specialised and impersonal roles, leading to alienation and sometimes social problems such as crime or mental illness.

Cities often segregate into ethnic ghettos, areas of poverty, and middle-class neighbourhoods, reflecting both cultural diversity and economic inequality.

Apart from Robert Park and Louis Wirth, other scholars of the Chicago School made important contributions to urban sociology:

Ernest W. Burgess's Concentric Zone Model: Burgess explained urban growth in terms of a series of concentric (circular) zones spreading out from the central business district of the city. According to him, cities expand outward in rings, each with a different social and economic character. For example, there are the central business district, the transitional zone (with slums and immigrant communities), working-class housing, middle-class residential areas, and finally the commuter zone. This model became one of the earliest systematic ways to study urban spatial organisation.

- **R.M. Hurd's Star Theory:** Hurd suggested that cities do not simply grow in circular patterns but expand outward along major transportation routes such as railways, tramlines, and highways. This produces a star-shaped city, especially common in places with well-developed public transport systems.

- **R.D. McKenzie's Ecological Processes:** McKenzie focused on the dynamic changes within urban areas. He identified seven processes: concentration, de concentration, centralisation, decentralisation, segregation, invasion, and succession. These processes explain how land use and populations change over time. For example, when one social group moves into an area, another may be displaced, a process McKenzie called "invasion and succession."

McKenzie classified communities into four types:

1. **Primary service communities:** mainly agricultural or rural, supporting only a small population.

2. **Commercial communities:** centred around trade and business.

3. **Industrial towns:** based on manufacturing and industry.

4. **Non-economic base communities:** those not directly dependent on a specific economic function.

1.1.4.2 Post-Chicago School Developments

After the 1950s, urban sociology moved beyond the early ecological models of the Chicago School. Scholars such as Otis Dudley Duncan and Amos H. Hawley played a key role in this transition by combining ecological thinking with structural functionalism.

- **Duncan's Ecological Complex Model:** Duncan proposed that urban development should be understood in terms of the interaction between four key factors:

1. **Environment:** the physical setting of a city.
2. **Population:** size, density, and composition of people.
3. **Technology:** innovations that shape communication, transport, and industry.
4. **Social organisation:** institutions and patterns of social life.

This framework, known as the ecological complex, explained how these elements constantly interact to shape cities and communities.

- Hawley's Functional Differentiation and Adaptation: Hawley argued that the main concern of urban ecology should not just be physical space but how populations adapt to changing conditions through specialised functions. He suggested that cities evolve as different groups and institutions find distinct roles, creating a system of interdependence. His work was closely aligned with Parsonian functionalism, focusing on stability, adaptation, and integration in urban systems.

1.1.4.3 Criticisms of the Chicago School

Although the Chicago School played a pioneering role in establishing urban sociology, its theories have been widely criticised for being too narrow and outdated in some respects.

1. Overemphasis on Physical Layout

The ecological models, especially Burgess's Concentric Zone Model, placed too much stress on the physical form of cities. They assumed that cities grow in neat circular patterns radiating outward from the centre. In reality, urban growth is often more irregular, influenced by geography, history, politics, and planning policies. For example, waterfronts, hills, and highways often disrupt neat patterns of expansion.

2. Limited Scope Focus on American Cities

Most Chicago School studies were based on Chicago and other early 20th-century American cities. Critics argue that these cities cannot represent urban development everywhere. Modern global cities such as Tokyo, Mumbai, and São Paulo have very different histories, social structures, and forms of growth. Thus, the Chicago School's theories are not always applicable to today's complex and diverse urban centres.

3. Economic Bias

The Chicago sociologists tended to explain urban growth mainly through economic competition: the struggle for space, housing, and resources. However, later scholars such as Firey (1945) argued that cultural and symbolic factors are equally important. For example, certain neighbourhoods may retain their character not just because of economic reasons but because people attach strong sentimental or symbolic value to them (such as religious, ethnic, or historical significance).

4. Neglect of Subcultures and Neighbourhood Life

The Chicago School focused heavily on issues of social disorganisation, deviance, and maladjustment in urban areas. While this was important, they failed to fully capture the positive aspects of urban subcultures, such as ethnic communities, artistic groups, or working-class neighbourhoods, which create rich cultural identities and solidarity. Later studies in urban sociology highlighted that cities are not only places of alienation but also centres of creativity, diversity, and community-building.

5. Post–World War II Urban Changes

The models of the Chicago School reflected the early industrial city but did not anticipate the massive changes in cities after World War II. With the rise of the automobile, highways, and suburbanisation, many cities became less centralised and more dispersed. Instead of a compact centre with clear zones, cities spread outward into sprawling suburbs, edge cities, and metropolitan regions. This made the old ecological models less relevant for understanding modern urban development.

1.1.5 Nature and Scope of Urban Sociology

Urban sociology is a branch of sociology that focuses on the study of city life and urban societies. According to sociologist Erickson, urban sociology is a generalising science. This means that it tries to understand the patterns and outcomes of different types of social behaviour found in urban settings. Its goal is to explain how city life affects people's actions, relationships, institutions, and the types of civilisations that emerge from urban living.

Urban sociology is a dynamic field that explores the structure, processes, and impact of urban life on individuals and society. It deals with the relationship between cities and civilisation, particularly focusing on how modern urban life shapes and is shaped by various social, cultural, and institutional forces. Scholars like Botero, Weber, Spengler, Toynbee, Geddes, Ghurye, Mumford, and Wirth have all explored the city as a mirror or symbol of civilisation. While some traced the specific causes behind urban growth, others viewed cities as central to the development and decline of civilisations. Redfield and colleagues added a new layer to this understanding by differentiating between primary and secondary urbanisation, emphasising the transformation from the "Little Tradition" to the "Great Tradition" and the emergence of freedom from traditional social structures.

1.1.5.1 Key Characteristics of Urban Areas

- Urban populations generally depend on non-agricultural occupations for their livelihood.
- Cities are larger settlements with a differentiated neighbourhood structure.
- Urban areas have a high population density and a complex division of labour.
- City life exhibits diverse patterns of social interaction.
- Interpersonal relationships in urban areas are more impersonal and distinct from those in village life.

One of the earliest and most influential thinkers in this field was Louis Wirth, who emphasised the complexity of city life. He explained that a city is not just a crowded place; it is a space filled with diversity: people from different backgrounds, cultures, occupations, and income levels. This diversity, or heterogeneity, makes city life rich and exciting but also creates social challenges such as inequality, segregation, and conflict. Wirth believed that studying cities required

new methods, such as statistics and mapping, to truly understand the complexity of urban populations.

Urban sociology overlaps with many other fields, including geography, political science, economics, and anthropology. For example, it studies how space is used in cities (geography), how people behave politically (political science), how public policies affect the economy (economics), and how cultures evolve in urban areas (anthropology). Urban sociologists often work alongside town planners, social workers, educators, and others involved in improving city life. This overlap makes urban sociology one of the most eclectic and broad fields in the discipline.

However, due to this diversity, many concepts in urban sociology, such as "urban", "urbanism", "urban society", "urbanisation", and "modernisation", are often used loosely or without clear definitions. Sjoberg (1959) pointed out that students and researchers need to clarify these terms to use them effectively. Because of the complexity of cities, urban sociology must clearly define many key concepts such as community, ecology, city, urban, urbanism, urban society, urbanisation, industrialisation, and modernisation.

1.1.5.2 Key Concepts in Urban Sociology

1. The Concept of Community

The term "community" has several meanings. Sometimes it simply refers to all people living in the same area. But often it means more than just a location. It includes emotional ties, cooperation, and shared social relationships.

- Kingsley Davis defined a community as the smallest group in a specific area that includes all aspects of social life.
- McIver and Page emphasised social relationships, stating that a true community is one where people find all their social relationships within that group.

In simple terms, a community is marked by feelings of belonging, mutual support, and the ability to meet the needs of its members.

Pitirim Sorokin and Zimmerman have suggested the following features which give us a clearer understanding of urban community.

a. **Heterogeneity:** The urban community is a heterogeneous group, where people belong to different races, religions, languages, castes, and creeds. For example, in a city like Mumbai, people from different states and cultural groups live together, and they are often completely dissimilar. In London, Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis have their own communities.

b. **Secondary Relations:** The urban community is characterised by secondary relations. People tend to be indifferent towards one another. Face-to-face, friendly, or intimate relations may not be commonly observed among people.

c. **Voluntary Associations:** All people in the city are engaged in non-agricultural jobs and are necessarily members of many voluntary associations. According to their standard of living, they form their own residential groups, institutions, and associations.

d. **Social Mobility:** In urban society, social status is not traditional but based on economic status, educational standards, and talent. In other words, individual intelligence and talent bring progress, while heredity is not important.

e. **Individual Freedom:** In urban communities, men and women have

more independence. People adopt more individualistic attitudes. The city dweller is more selective in his choices and more individualistic in his preferences, guided by his own whims and fancies.

f. **Occupations:** All people are engaged in non-agricultural jobs such as business, marketing, office work, policing, law, industry and factories, transport communication, hospitals, educational institutions, theatre, and the share market. As result, they are often distanced from nature and a simple life.

g. **Secondary Control:** In urban communities, individual behaviour is not controlled by family, religion, or neighbourhood. Instead, it is regulated by secondary organisations such as government, police, and the courts.

h. **Lack of Community Feeling:** There is a lack of community feeling—of oneness, unity, and integrity of family and neighbourhood—in the city. In urban communities, people are preoccupied with their individual achievements, which lead to a neglect of the sense of oneness and unity with the city.

i. **Social Disorganisation:** Urban communities have a number of institutions and associations that operate independently. Consequently, there is often struggle, conflict, and competition, resulting in social disorganisation being evident and felt.

j. **Unstable Family:** The family is no longer the economic, educational, protective, recreational, and effective unit it once was. It has lost much of its control over individual members, with many traditional functions of the family being transferred to external agencies. It is said that the urban family is not firmly organised.

2. The Concept of Ecology

Urban ecology was developed by Robert E. Park of the Chicago School, who applied ideas from natural science to the study of cities. In biology, ecology studies how living things interact with their environment. Similarly, urban ecology examines how people and social groups interact within urban spaces. It compares the city to a living organism composed of parts that must work together to function well. Different groups in the city compete, cooperate, and depend on each other. Cities change over time based on political, economic, and social forces. For example, immigration and emigration affect how people adjust to city life and form new communities.

There are many definitions of human ecology. For example, Hawley defined it as the study of how communities develop and are organised. Gist and Halbert focused on how people and institutions are distributed across a city and the patterns that emerge from this distribution. In short, human ecology investigate show urban space and social life are interconnected.

The ecological dimension of urban sociology is another key area, where the city is examined as a physical and spatial entity. This includes its buildings, infrastructure, and the distribution of people based on caste, occupation, income, or lifestyle. For example, Indian cities reflect a historical layering, from old caste-based neighbourhoods or "mohallas" to newer, income-based colonies. These ecological patterns influence not only physical space but also social relationships and everyday interactions.

Urban life also redefines forms of social organisation. Urban sociology examines how individuals navigate city life, often developing new personality traits, coping mechanisms, and lifestyles. Early sociologists assumed urban residents were impersonal

and segmented, but modern research, such as that by Lofland and Popenoe, highlights adaptation strategies and the persistence of primary groups even in urban settings. Primary groups, which are small, intimate, face-to-face groups like families, couples, or close friends, may face pressure in large urban centres, where life is often impersonal and fast-paced. However, these groups remain central to social stability and change, offering emotional support and a sense of belonging in an otherwise fragmented social landscape.

Urban sociology also addresses various social problems such as poverty, unemployment, crime, racial conflict, pollution, and mental health issues, collectively referred to as the "urban crisis." While these problems are often linked to urbanisation, it is simplistic to blame the city itself. Instead, sociologists seek to understand the complex relationships and systems within which these problems arise.

Furthermore, sociologists examine mid-level organisational forms like neighbourhoods, voluntary associations, and social networks. Neighbourhoods, though less formal than bureaucracies, continue to provide a sense of identity and participation for many urban dwellers. Voluntary associations serve expressive and instrumental functions not met by other social forms. Meanwhile, bureaucratic organisations and social institutions (like family, education, and religion) represent the highest levels of social organisation, providing structured responses to the needs of urban communities, even as they evolve under the pressures of modernisation and urban growth.

In urban sociology, the primary focus is on human beings rather than spatial patterns. It emphasises non-material culture over physical objects, groups instead of areas, social institutions rather than infrastructure, and social techniques more than technology. This distinction highlights how urban sociology differs from disciplines such as geography, political science, and economics. Urban studies, as a broader field, have attracted multidisciplinary research that includes contributions from history, demography, social anthropology, and most notably, sociology. Within this framework, urban sociology emerges as a specialised branch of urban studies.

During the 1960s and 1970s, urban sociologists promoted an interdisciplinary approach and encouraged comparative studies. Their work involved vibrant debate and discussion about the appropriate subjects of analysis and methodological issues. These sociologists often blended political activism with their academic studies of the city, focusing on themes such as social conflict, access to power and resources, and the systems of production, consumption, exchange, and distribution. In doing so, they remained committed to the foundational concerns of sociology. While geographers and historians concentrated on 'space' and 'time', sociologists contributed with the concepts of 'structure' and 'culture' to the evolving discourse of urban studies.

The main subject of urban sociology is the city, encompassing its growth, structure, functions, and problems. It addresses important urban issues such as city planning, traffic systems, water supply, sanitation, housing, beggary, juvenile delinquency, and crime. The scope of urban sociology is extensive because it not only studies the facts of urban life but also seeks to offer practical solutions to problems arising from the fast-changing nature of society.

4. Urbanisation and Urbanism

- Urban sociology focuses on two key processes: urbanization and urbanism.
- Urbanization is the process of city growth. It occurs when people move from rural areas to urban areas, leading

to an increase in urban population, the expansion of city spaces, and the development of infrastructure. It studies how and why cities grow and how people adapt to urban life.

Urbanism refers to the way of life in cities. It examines urban culture, daily routines, symbols, values, and how people adjust to urban environments. According to Louis Wirth, urbanism is a unique way of life that is markedly different from rural life.

1.1.5.3 Scope of Urban Sociology

1. **Studies city life and social behaviour:** It focuses on how people live, work, and interact in cities.

2. **Explores the impact of urbanization:** Urban sociology examine show the rapid growth of cities changes family structures, occupations, and lifestyles.

3. **Identifies urban problems and solutions:** Issues such as unemployment, poverty, traffic, pollution, and crime are studied, along with potential solutions.

4. **Focuses on social relationships:** It emphasises how friendships, family ties, and networks survive or change in urban settings.

5. **Studies space, culture, and environment:** Urban sociology encompasses not just people, but also how they use land, organise neighbourhoods, and create urban culture.

6. **Examines cooperation and conflict:** City life involves both teamwork (for example, community organisations) and tensions (such as ethnic conflict or class struggles).

7. **A specialised branch of sociology:** While general sociology looks at society as a whole, urban sociology studies society within the context of the city.

8. **Uses scientific methods:** It relies on surveys, statistics, fieldwork, and observation to analyse urban issues.

According to Marshall, urban sociology studies:

1. **Urbanization:** growth and expansion of cities.

2. **Industrial cities:** how industrialisation shaped urban development.

3. **Complex social relationships:** interactions in diverse, large populations.

4. **Social structures:** the organisation of institutions and classes in cities.

The German sociologist Georg Simmel provided one of the earliest analyses of city life. He focused on:

1. **Urban lifestyle and personality:** how city life makes individuals more independent but also more reserved.

2. **Social organisation and culture:** urban life encourages rational thinking but reduces emotional ties.

3. **City structures:** the physical and social layout of the city.

4. **Urban residents' characteristics:** city dwellers may appear impersonal, but this is also a coping mechanism for fast-paced life.

Jary and Jary (2000) identified the following as central themes:

1. **Urban aspects of society :** cities as centres of economy and politics.

2. **Social life in cities:** how groups, families, and individuals adapt.

3. **Social order and change:** how urban growth brings new forms of organisation.

4. **Neighbourhood and housing studies:** how people identify with their local areas.

5. **Race and ethnicity:** tensions and cooperation among diverse groups in cities.

Azam and Ali (2005) organised the scope of urban sociology into five major areas:

1. Social Change Perspective

   - Studies changes in city structure and population.
   - Examines shifting behaviours and communities.
   - Analyses how modernisation alters social norms.

2. **Social Organisation Perspective**

   - Examines individuals, groups, institutions, and bureaucracy in cities.
   - Example: How family roles differ in urban versus rural areas.

3. **Ecological Perspective**

   - Focuses on the relationship between population, environment, and technology.
   - Example: How transportation and technology reshape urban life.

4. **Social Problem Perspective**

   - Studies urban issues such as poverty, disease, unemployment, housing shortages, and crime.

5. **Social Policy Perspective**

   - Aims to suggest practical solutions to urban challenges.
   - Example: Housing policies, welfare schemes, and urban planning.

Recap

- The term "urban" originates from the Latin *urbanus*, meaning "belonging to a city," while "urbane" evolved to describe refined, city-associated sophistication.
- Early fascination with cities across civilisations highlighted their dual nature—centres of wealth and creativity but also moral decay—thereby inspiring early urban studies.
- Modern urban sociology emerged in the early 20th century, influenced by Georg Simmel's *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903) and Robert E. Park's foundational 1915 work *The City*.
- The Chicago School (1920s–30s) pioneered urban sociology, studying Chicago's rapid industrialisation, migration patterns, and social inequalities as a model for urban research.
- Key Chicago School theories included Park's human ecology (cities as ecosystems), Burgess's concentric zone model (city expansion in rings), and Wirth's urbanism (impersonal, dense, diverse city life).

- Post-1950s urban sociology expanded beyond ecological models, incorporating Duncan's ecological complex (environment, population, technology, social organisation) and Hawley's functional adaptation theories.
- Criticisms of the Chicago School included its overemphasis on American cities, neglect of cultural and symbolic factors, and inability to explain post-WWII suburbanisation and global urban diversity.
- Urban sociology examines urbanisation (city growth) and urbanism (city lifestyles), focusing on social behaviour, relationships, and the impact of density and diversity.
- The field addresses urban problems like crime, poverty, and housing shortages while exploring solutions through policy, planning, and community studies.
- Key concepts include urban ecology (human-environment interaction), social organisation (institutions, bureaucracy), and the tension between impersonal city life and persistent community ties.
- Urban sociology overlaps with geography, economics, and political science, employing interdisciplinary methods to study spatial, cultural, and economic urban dynamics.
- In India, urban sociology developed later (1960s), facing challenges such as the rural-urban continuum and a lack of distinct theoretical frameworks compared to Western models.

Objective Questions

1. From which Latin word is the term "urban" derived?
2. Who wrote *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1903)?
3. Which university was the Chicago School of urban sociology associated with?
4. What model did Ernest Burgess propose for city growth?
5. What term did Louis Wirth use to describe lifestyles in cities?
6. What concept compares cities to ecosystems with "natural areas"?
7. Which sociologist introduced the *ecological complex* model?
8. What post-World War II urban trend challenged the theories of the Chicago School?
9. What is the process of city expansion and population shift called?
10. What is the study of human-environment interaction in cities called?

11. Which Indian sociologist contributed to early urban studies in India?

12. What key urban issue involves inadequate housing and slums?

Answers

1. *Urbanus*
2. Simmel
3. Chicago
4. Concentric
5. Urbanism
6. Ecology
7. Duncan
8. Suburbanization
9. Urbanization
10. Ecology
11. Ghurye
12. Housing

Assignments

1. Define and differentiate between "urban" and "urbane" with examples, tracing their etymological roots.
2. Explain Louis Wirth's concept of "urbanism as a way of life" and discuss its relevance in modern cities.
3. How did the Chicago School contribute to the development of urban sociology? Identify two limitations of their approach.
4. Discuss one major urban problem in your local context using concepts from urban ecology.
5. Compare and contrast urbanisation in Western cities (e.g., Chicago) with urbanisation in Indian cities. What factors explain the differences?

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UNIT 2

Key Urban Concepts

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the key concepts of city, town, metropolis, megalopolis, suburb, and exurb
- illustrate the differences between various urban forms using real-life examples
- compare and contrast the structural and functional features of cities, metropolises, and megalopolises
- assess the impact of rapid suburbanization and the growth of exurbs on urban planning

Prerequisite

Imagine a young student named Nita who lives in a small farming village. Every morning, she walks past paddy fields, greeting neighbours who all know her family well. This is the rural world: close-knit, slow-paced, and strongly connected to land and tradition. One day, Nita visits her cousin in a nearby town. Here, she sees a bus stand, a weekly market, schools, and small offices. Life is busier than in her village, but people still recognise each other. She realises the town is a bridge between her village and the bigger cities.

Later, Nita travels to Kozhikode city for higher studies. She is amazed to find tall buildings, universities, shopping centres, and industries. She notices how diverse the population is; people from different religions, castes, and even regions live and work together. Social life feels more impersonal but offers many opportunities. During vacations, Nita visits her uncle in a metropolis like Mumbai. She is overwhelmed by its size: the traffic, the endless crowds, the film industry, the stock market, and

the global connections. She learns that a metropolis is not just a city but a major hub of economy, culture, and migration.

In a class project, she studies the megalopolis, a vast chain of connected cities stretching across regions, such as the Delhi NCR region or the Boston–Washington corridor in the U.S. She realises that in a megalopolis, cities grow so large that they merge, creating one continuous urban belt.

On weekends, Nita's friend invites her to their suburb, a residential area just outside the main city. It feels quieter, greener, and more family-friendly compared to the city centre. Later, she learns about the exurb, which is even further away, offering a countryside feel but still linked to the city through jobs and transport. By the end of her journey, Nita discovers that the rural and urban are not separate boxes but part of a continuum, a flow where villages, towns, cities, metropolises, suburbs, and exurbs are interconnected and constantly changing. This unit will introduce you to these key concepts in urban sociology.

Keywords

Urbanisation, Urbanism, Ecology, City, Urban outgrowth, Census towns, Mega city

Discussion

1.2.1 Rural–Urban Continuum

The rural–urban continuum refers to the idea that rural and urban areas are not completely separate or opposite categories. Instead, they exist on a continuous scale, with many settlements showing mixed characteristics of both rural and urban life. In simple terms, villages gradually change into towns, and towns gradually develop into cities. There is no sharp boundary between rural and urban areas.

Traditionally, rural areas are associated with agriculture, low population density, and close community ties, while urban areas are linked with industry, services, high population density, and impersonal relationships. However, due to urbanisation, industrialisation, transport, education, and communication, rural and urban features increasingly overlap.

As a result:

- Rural areas adopt urban lifestyles and occupations.
- Urban areas retain some rural practices and cultural traditions.

This overlap forms a continuum rather than a strict division.

1.2.1.1 Redfield's Rural–Urban Continuum

Robert Redfield developed the Rural–Urban Continuum model in his studies of communities in Yucatán, Mexico, during the 1930s.

- **Folk Society (Rural Pole):** Small, isolated, non-literate, homogeneous, with a strong sense of belongingness

or solidarity. Life is based on tradition, kinship, religion, and personal relationships. The economy is based on status rather than markets.

- **Urban Society (Urban Pole):** Represents the opposite end of the continuum. Larger, more diverse, literate, secular, and market-oriented. Relationships are more impersonal and individualistic.

Redfield's idea of a continuum means rural and urban life are not separate categories but points along a gradual transition. Communities can be placed anywhere along this line depending on their characteristics.

Key shifts as we move from rural to urban:

1. From cultural unity to cultural diversity.
2. From collective orientation to individualism.
3. From sacred (religious) values to secular (non-religious) values.

1.2.1.2 Criticism of Redfield's Approach

While influential, the Rural–Urban Continuum model has been criticized for:

Redfield concerns himself largely with the folk pole of the continuum, which receives much attention on the characteristics of folk society.

1. Overemphasising the city as the only source of change, ignoring other factors.
2. Assuming all changes follow a rural-to-urban path, which may not always be true.
3. Treating certain traits as linked when they may be independent.
4. Oversimplifying rural and urban categories, ignoring diversity within them.
5. Focusing on formal (structural) aspects rather than psychological or cultural depth.
6. Containing value judgments: idealising rural life and viewing modernity as decline.

The Rural–Urban Continuum is a useful tool for understanding how communities change over time. It views rural and urban life as opposite poles with many stages in between. Redfield's work highlights the gradual social, cultural, and economic shifts that occur in this transition. However, the model has limitations, and researchers must consider other influences and variations when studying social change.

1.2.3 City

A city is often understood as the opposite of a rural area. Both represent two ends of a spectrum. The facilities available to people living in cities are usually not accessible to villagers. Cities grow mainly because people from different places move there in search of better infrastructure, jobs, and living conditions. Therefore, cities are not fixed or unchanging; they grow and change over time in terms of size, population, functions, and complexity.

A major question sociologists ask is: Why are cities important? Cities matter because they provide modern facilities and help people manage their daily lives better. Cities reflect human progress and the desire to improve in all areas of life.

1.2.3.1 Approaches to Define City

Some scholars describe a city as a settlement so large that people no longer know each other personally. Sombart calls this a "sociological" definition. However,

this is not always accurate, especially in small cities, where face-to-face contact is actually more frequent in urban areas than in rural ones. Sorokin and Zimmerman argue that a higher number of social contacts is an urban characteristic, not a rural one. In India, small towns often resemble villages in terms of social closeness, making this definition less applicable.

There is no single agreed-upon definition of a city among sociologists. For example, Lewis Mumford (1968) provided a detailed explanation in his work *City: Forms and Functions*. He pointed out that although cities have existed since ancient times, scholars only began studying them seriously in recent centuries.

From a sociological perspective, a city is an abstract idea, but it is made up of real elements such as people, transport systems, buildings, and services. According to Bergel (1955), a city is formed when these elements are functionally integrated. Definitions of cities can differ based on legal, economic, social, statistical, and occupational viewpoints.

Mumford (1948), in his article "City: Forms and Functions" in the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, observed that although cities have existed since the beginning of civilisation, they were not seriously studied for a long time. Even today, defining the term is challenging because cities have undergone many changes over time, yet they have maintained their architectural and institutional identity. In simple terms, most people think they know what a city is, but experts still find it hard to agree on one definition.

Different languages have different ways of categorising settlements. For example, German uses a clear sequence of terms like Dorf (village), Kleinstadt (small town), Mittelstadt (medium city), Grossstadt (large city), and Millionenstadt (city with over one million people). In English, words like metropolis, megalopolis, and conurbation are used for larger urban forms.

Although a city is an abstract concept, it is made up of very real elements such as residents, buildings, transportation systems, and public facilities. What makes it a city is the functional integration of all these elements into a unified whole (Bergel, 1955). Cities perform many different functions, and not all cities share the same ones.

Scholars and governments have tried to define cities using different approaches, including:

1. Legal definitions
2. Statistical definitions
3. Population density
4. Occupational structure
5. Sociological and economic definitions

1. Legal Basis

In many countries, a place becomes a city through a legal process. A higher authority grants a charter or official declaration giving it municipal or civic status. In India, the State Government grants this status, creating what are called statutory towns. However, this method has limitations. The granting of legal status usually occurs after the place has already developed city-like characteristics, not before. Also, in many parts of the world (especially in the East), some cities have never had such legal charters. Therefore, legal recognition does not necessarily create a city; it only acknowledges its existence.

2. Statistical Basis

Some governments define cities based on population size.

1. In the United States, the Census Bureau considers any "incorporated place" with 2,500 or more inhabitants a city.

2. In France (since 1846), the minimum has been 2,000 people, and this standard was supported internationally in 1887.

3. In contrast, Korea's minimum requirement is much higher, at 44,000 people.

In India, the census uses 5,000 people as the cut-off for non-statutory towns. However, population size alone is not enough to define a city; two places with the same number of people can be very different in their structure, economy, and way of life.

3. Population Density Basis

Another approach is to define a city by the number of people living per unit of land. However, this also has its problems.

- Some villages are densely populated, while some urban areas have very few residents.
- For example, in Mumbai, 55% of slum dwellers occupy only 6% of the city's residential land, making these areas extremely dense, while other parts of the city have far fewer than 50 persons per acre.
- Internationally, densities range from as low as 10 persons per hectare (in Australia and New Zealand) to over 33 in Paris.

Because density varies greatly from place to place, it is difficult to set an exact figure that separates rural from urban.

4. Occupational Basis

Occupational structure focuses on the type of work people do. Sociologist Walter F. Willcox suggested that rural areas are dominated by agriculture, while cities are places where agriculture is almost absent and other occupations dominate (industry, trade, services, etc.). This approach highlights that the key difference between a rural area and a city lies in the kind of work people do, not just in numbers or density.

5. The Indian Census Definition

Any urban area with a population of 100,000 or more is classified as a city in India. The Census of India combines several factors—legal status, population size, occupational structure, and density. A place is considered urban if it is: a) A municipality, corporation, cantonment board, or notified town area; or b) Meets all of the following:

- Minimum population of 5,000.
- At least 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural work (though definitions of this have varied in different census years).
- Population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km.

In 1961 and 1971, work in forestry, fishing, livestock, plantations, and orchards was classified as non-agricultural. From 1981 onwards, these were reclassified as agricultural. The discretion given to Census Directors to declare some places urban even if they did not meet the criteria was removed in 1991 and continues to be excluded in later censuses.

6. Multiple Criteria Approach

Sorokin and Zimmerman propose eight criteria for defining a city:

1. **Occupation** (types of jobs)
2. **Environment** (physical setting)

3. **Size** (population scale)
4. **Population density**
5. **Diversity of population** (heterogeneity)
6. **Social differentiation and stratification** (social layers)
7. **Mobility** (movement of people)
8. **Systems of interaction** (number and type of social contacts)

These characteristics can exist in both rural and urban areas. The question is: At what point does a rural settlement become urban?

1.2.3.2 Changing Role of Cities in Society

Karl Marx argued that the role of the city changes with each mode of production (e.g., feudalism, capitalism). Southall (1998) supports this idea, noting that studying cities involves understanding their changing social, cultural, political, and economic roles. He emphasises concentration—not only of people but also of relationships, institutions, and activities. Cities intensify social roles in domains such as kinship, religion, politics, economy, and leisure.

R.E. Dickinson (1951) offers a broad definition of a city that combines many characteristics:

1. **An institutional centre** —religious, cultural, political, and administrative.
2. **Production centre** —especially industrial but also agricultural.
3. **Commercial and transport hub.**
4. **Residential area for elites** —providing comfort and cultural amenities.
5. **Home of workers**—the majority of the population.

This multi-dimensional perspective helps capture the complexity of what makes a city, beyond just size or population density.

1.2.3.3 Classifying Cities based on Development Stages:

A. Griffith Taylor's Classification (1949)

Taylor identified six stages of city development:

1. **Sub-infantile:** A small settlement with a single street.
2. **Infantile:** No clear separation between residential, commercial, and industrial areas; no factories.
3. **Juvenile:** Some development of a commercial centre, but limited separation of areas.
4. **Adolescent:** More defined residential areas begin to appear.
5. **Early Maturity:** Residential zones are more clearly divided.
6. **Mature:** Cities have separate commercial zones and different residential zones, from rich to poor.

This model mostly applies to Western cities and lacks specific indicators, so it may not be practical for all societies.

1.2.3.4 B. Lewis Mumford's Classification (1938)

Mumford, influenced by Patrick Geddes, described six stages of urban development:

1. **Eopolis:** Early rural settlements with farming, mining, and religious structures.
2. **Polis:** Villages become towns with trade,

wealth, and social hierarchy.

3. **Metropolis:** Many villages combine to form a large city with specialised jobs and trade.

4. **Megalopolis:** A large city with cultural diversity and class conflicts.

5. **Tyrannopolis:** Decline begins; luxury and indifference take over; the city becomes exploitative.

6. **Necropolis:** Final stage of decay marked by war, disease, and destruction of culture.

1.2.3.5 Pre-Industrial and Post-Industrial Cities

Before industrialisation, cities were smaller and often developed for military or administrative reasons. Rome and later London were among the few large cities. The Industrial Revolution led to the rapid growth of cities. Technological advancements in farming, textiles, and construction allowed more people to live and work in urban areas. During this time, cities no longer grew solely because of surrounding farmland. Instead, they developed based on their usefulness for producing and distributing goods. Cities near raw materials or transport hubs became important centres of industry.

1.2.3.6 Post-Industrial Cities

In post-industrial societies, cities are dominated by service industries rather than manufacturing. These cities often have:

- A strong quaternary sector (knowledge-based services like IT, education, and research).
- Office buildings and government institutions.
- High levels of income inequality—with professionals earning high wages, while service workers (such as cleaners, drivers, etc.) earn less.
- Expensive housing, which only the wealthy can afford.

1.2.3.7 Types of Cities: Global, Capital, Primate, Dual, and Metropolis

1. Global Cities

A global city is an important urban centre that plays a major role in the world economy. These cities are central to international trade, finance, and communication networks. The idea of global cities became popular in the 1980s with the rise of globalisation. Researchers observed that some cities were becoming hubs for multinational companies and international finance.

Cities like New York, London, and Tokyo were among the first to be recognised as global cities. Later, other cities such as Paris, São Paulo, Sydney, Frankfurt, and Mexico City were added to the list. These cities are connected in a global network that supports the needs of global businesses and corporations.

Global cities are shaped by:

- The expansion of transnational corporations (TNCs).
- A shift from mass production (Fordism) to flexible urban-based production.

They often serve as centres for decision-making, innovation, and high-level services. At the same time, these cities also deal with local governance challenges and increasing social inequality. This mixture of global and local roles is sometimes referred to as "glocalisation."

2. Capital Cities

A capital city is the political and administrative centre of a country. Capitals are often chosen for strategic or symbolic reasons. For example:

- Madrid, in Spain, is located at the centre of the country to symbolise unity.
- Abuja, Nigeria's capital, was chosen and built in the centre of the country to reduce regional bias.
- Washington, D.C., in the U.S., was the result of political compromise between regions.

In some cases, countries have more than one capital city:

- South Africa has three: Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), and Bloemfontein (judicial).
- Bolivia has Sucre (constitutional capital) and La Paz (administrative capital).

The capital city often represents national identity and serves as a symbol of the country to the outside world.

3. Primate Cities

A primate city is the largest and most dominant city in a country—economically, politically, and culturally. The term was introduced by geographer Mark Jefferson in the 1930s. A city is considered "primate" if:

- It is more than twice as large as the second-largest city.
- It dominates the country's economic and communication systems.

Primate cities often reflect the culture and values of the whole nation. Many primate cities are also the national capital.

4. Dual Cities

The term "dual city" refers to a city where there is a clear social and economic divide between rich and poor. This concept is often discussed by neo-Marxist sociologists, especially in the context of late capitalism and globalisation.

Sociologist Saskia Sassen argues that in global cities, low-paid jobs are essential for economic growth, but they also increase poverty and inequality. As a result, some people become extremely wealthy (e.g., the "nouveaux riches" and yuppies), while others fall into poverty and live in urban ghettos. This has led to a shrinking middle class, a growing upper class, and an expanding lower class. The "new poor"—often former industrial workers—struggle to access education and new technologies, trapping them in poverty.

5. Metropolis and Megacity

A metropolis is a large city that encompasses several smaller towns and surrounding areas functioning together. It serves as a centre for:

- Population movement
- Trade
- Services
- Information and cultural exchange

A megacity is an even larger urban area, usually with a population of over 10 million people. These cities are the result of rapid urbanisation, especially in developing countries. In 1980, there were only three megacities in the world. By 2006, this number had increased to 24, and it is expected to grow—especially in Asia and Africa. Many of the world's fastest-growing cities are in countries like India and China.

1.2.3.8 Current Theories of City Growth

Sociologists have developed several theories to explain how cities grow and develop over time. These theories help us understand the spatial, economic, and demographic structures of urban areas. The three most important theories of urban growth are:

1. Concentric Zone Theory by E.W. Burgess
2. Sector Theory by Homer Hoyt
3. Multiple Nuclei Theory by Harris and Ullman

These are also known as urban structure models or theories of urban morphology. Although every city is unique, common patterns of land use often emerge. These three theories attempt to explain these patterns.

1. Concentric Zone Theory (E.W. Burgess, 1923)

Burgess, a sociologist, introduced this model in 1923. He believed that cities grow outward in concentric circles from a central point. Each circle, or zone, represents a different type of land use or residential pattern.

The Five Zones:

1. **Zone I**: Central Business District (CBD): The core of the city, where commercial, civic, and transport activities are concentrated.
2. **Zone II** : Zone in Transition: An area of declining housing, old buildings, and light industries. Often home to immigrants and poorer populations.
3. **Zone III**: Working-Class Homes: Stable, working-class residential areas close to factories.
4. **Zone IV:** Middle-Class Residential Zone: Larger homes and better living conditions. Inhabited by professionals, small business owners, and clerks.
5. **Zone V** : Commuter Zone: Suburban areas, towns, or villages beyond city limits. Residents often commute to the city for work.

Criticism:

- Cities are not always circular in shape.
- Local geography (rivers, hills, railroads) affects how zones develop.
- Industrial areas may follow transport lines, not circular patterns.
- The model doesn't apply well to pre-industrial cities (e.g., medieval cities where elites lived at the centre).
- Cultural, political, and religious factors are ignored.

Despite these criticisms, the model helped establish urban sociology and is still used with modifications today.

2. Sector Theory (Homer Hoyt, 1939)

Hoyt proposed this model after observing that cities had changed significantly since Burgess's time. With the rise of the automobile and improved transportation, new patterns of urban growth emerged. According to Hoyt, land use grows in sectors (wedges) rather than concentric rings. These sectors radiate outward from the CBD along major roads or transport lines.

Key Features:

- High-rent residential areas form sectors along transport routes.
- As cities expand, high-class housing

moves outward within the same sector.

- Older homes become medium- or low-rent areas.
- Sectors reflect the influence of economic class and accessibility on land use.

Criticism:

Walter Firey argued that cultural and social factors also shape land use.

- Maps (used by Hoyt) show only patterns—not the reasons behind them.
- Wealthy residents do not always follow predictable patterns.
- Natural features and history affect development in ways Hoyt did not fully consider.

Despite criticism, Hoyt's theory is supported by data from many American cities and provides useful insights, especially regarding residential patterns.

3. Multiple Nuclei Theory (Harris and Ullman, 1945)

Harris and Ullman argued that cities do not grow around a single centre (CBD), but rather around multiple centres or "nuclei". Each nucleus represents a hub of specific activity, such as business, industry, education, or housing. Cities grow and organise themselves in complex ways because different activities require different types of land or locations. For example, central business districts (CBDs) need areas with high accessibility, while industries often cluster near transport routes for convenience. Some land uses, such as heavy industry and luxury housing, are incompatible and therefore remain apart, while low-income housing or bulk storage usually develops in less expensive areas.

Certain nuclei within cities are historical in nature, such as "The City" and "Westminster" in London, while others develop later, such as industrial hubs that grow outside the original city core. Over time, this leads to the development of multiple smaller centres, each serving different purposes. For instance, Chicago developed a second industrial nucleus in the Calumet district, and in India, cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Varanasi show a mix of historical and modern nuclei. This model highlights the complexity of real cities, which often combine features of both concentric and sector patterns. While it is not a strict theory, it provides a useful framework for understanding how urban land use evolves in relation to economic, cultural, and historical factors.

These three theories—Concentric, Sector, and Multiple Nuclei—offer different ways to understand city growth. While no model explains all cities perfectly, each provides useful insights into how urban areas develop:

- Burgess emphasised a simple, layered growth pattern.
- Hoyt highlighted the role of transport and class in shaping city sectors.
- Harris and Ullman focused on the diversity and multiple centres of modern cities.

Together, these theories contribute to a better understanding of urban structure and the sociological processes behind city development.

1.2.4 Town

A town is a type of human settlement that lies between a village and a city. It is larger than a village but smaller than a city. In a town, the population is too large for everyone to know each other personally, but informal social relationships still play an important role, similar to what we find in rural communities. In terms of social behaviour, towns often resemble rural areas more than large cities.

Towns and cities are both forms of urban settlements, but they differ in size, population, and sometimes in function. Cities are usually the largest settlements, characterised by high population density and a wide range of services and industries. Towns, on the other hand, are moderate in size, larger than villages but not as large or complex as cities.

The distinction between a town and a city can sometimes be confusing, as the terms are used differently in various countries. For example, what is considered a town in the United Kingdom might be classified as a city in the United States, and vice versa. Each country has its own legal definitions.

1.2.4.1 The Concept of Town in the Indian Context

In India, according to the Census, a place is classified as a town if it has a minimum population of 5,000. A settlement with a population of 100,000 (one lakh) or more is considered a city. Generally, town is a residential area with fewer people and services than a city, but more than a village.

In India, the definition of a "town" has evolved over time, especially in the Census records. Between 1901 and 1951, the definition remained largely unchanged. However, in 1961, the Census authorities sought to formalise and standardise it by introducing clear statistical criteria. Even so, Census Superintendents were given the flexibility to decide whether certain places on the border between "rural" and "urban" should be classified as towns (Bose, 1974).

1.2.4.2 Census of India, 1901

According to the 1901 Census, a "town" included:

- Every municipality, regardless of size.
- All civil lines (administrative areas) outside municipal limits.
- Any other continuous settlement with at least 5,000 people that the Provincial Superintendent decided to classify as a town.

During this period, the primary factor in classifying a place as a town was its administrative setup rather than population size. Some municipalities and cantonments had fewer than 5,000 people but were still counted as towns, while some large villages with over 5,000 people were not classified as towns. Census Superintendents also had special powers to classify any place as a town for specific reasons, regardless of its size or administrative status. This indicates that the definition was not entirely objective, as it was based more on administrative convenience than on strict statistical rules.

1.2.4.3 Changes after Independence: The 1961 Census

In 1961, a stricter definition of an urban area was introduced:

a. All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board, or notified town area committee.

b. All other places that met the following criteria:

i. Minimum population of 5,000.

ii. At least 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural activities.

iii. Population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre.

In 1981 and 1991, the definition changed slightly. Some activities such as forestry, fishing, livestock, plantations, and orchards were reclassified from "non-agricultural" to "agricultural." Additionally, the power of Census Directors to classify places as urban even if they did not meet all the criteria was removed in 1991 and continued to be

excluded in 2001.

1.2.4.4 Categories of Towns in the Indian Census

1. City – Any urban area with a population of 100,000 or more.

2. Census Town (CT) – Any place that:

   - Has a minimum population of 5,000.
   - Has at least 75% of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural activities.
   - Has a population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km.

1.2.4.5 Urban Agglomeration (UA) and Outgrowth (OG)

From 1971 onwards, the term "urban agglomeration" replaced "town group." Urban Agglomeration (UA) refers to a continuous urban spread made up of a main town and its adjoining urban outgrowths, or two or more physically connected towns with their own outgrowths. Outgrowth (OG) refers to areas such as railway colonies, university campuses, port areas, and military bases that are located near a town. They may be within village limits but are considered part of the urban area because of their close links with the town. They do not qualify as towns on their own but are treated as extensions of the main urban centre.

1.2.4.6 Classification of Towns

In India, urban areas are classified into different types by the Directorate of Census Operations. The main categories are:

1. Statutory Towns

These are areas legally declared as towns by the state governments under state laws. They include:

- Municipal Corporations (Mahanagar Palika / Nagar Nigam)
- Municipal Councils (Nagar Parishad)
- Nagar Panchayats
- Cantonment Boards, Notified Areas, and some tourist or pilgrimage centres

These towns are formally governed by urban local bodies and receive support for urban development and infrastructure.

2. Census Towns

These are villages or rural settlements that exhibit urban characteristics but are not legally declared as towns. The Census of India defines a Census Town based on three criteria:

1. Minimum population of 5,000
2. At least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural activities
3. Population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km

These towns appear urban in character but are governed by rural local bodies (like gram panchayats), leading to gaps in civic infrastructure and services.

3. Urban Outgrowths (OGs)

Urban Outgrowths are defined by the Census of India as:

"A viable unit such as a village or part of a village contiguous to a statutory town and possessing urban features such as pucca roads, electricity, tap water, drainage systems, schools, post offices, medical facilities, banks, etc." They function as part of the city but are not officially included in the municipal boundary.

1.2.4.7 Implications

Census Towns contribute to urbanisation statistically, but are governed rurally, so they often lack proper civic amenities.

- Statutory Towns, being formally recognised, receive more support from state governments, but there is no consistent rule across states for declaring them.
- Some states avoid declaring Census Towns as Statutory to continue receiving rural development funds from the central and state governments.
- Recognising a town as statutory also requires financial support for urban services—something that many states find difficult due to the low revenue base of small urban areas.

1.2.4.8 Why Do States Delay Declaring Statutory Towns?

Declaring towns as urban has both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it leads to the loss of rural development grants and places the financial responsibility for providing urban services on the state government. On the other hand, higher urbanisation rates can help attract investment, including foreign direct investment (FDI). For instance, Tamil Nadu declared many towns as urban between 1991 and 2001, resulting in a sevenfold rise in urbanisation, despite the actual number of towns only doubling.

There was a dramatic increase in Census Towns, suggesting a silent transformation of rural India into urban spaces—without matching urban governance.

1.2.4.9 Size Classification of Towns in India

The Census of India classifies towns by population size into six classes. These classifications are used for demographic studies but not for governance.

Most of the urban population in India lives in Class I cities, particularly in metropolitan areas. Although the number of small towns belonging to Classes IV–VI has increased significantly over time, they still account for only a small share of the total urban population.

1.2.5 Metropolis

The word "metropolis" comes from Greek and is made up of two parts: "meter," meaning "mother," and "polis," meaning "city." In English, it can be understood as "mother city." Urban historian Lewis Mumford classified cities in Europe based on their technological development into several stages: Eopolis, Polis, Metropolis, Megalopolis, Tyrannopolis, and Necropolis. In ancient times, the term "metropolis" referred to the main city of an empire, kingdom, or state—the place from which the surrounding territories were governed. Such cities were more important

Table 1.2.1 Growth in Number of Towns in India (2001–2011)

Type of Towns	2001	2011	% Change
Statutory Towns	3,799	4,041	6.37%
Census Towns	1,362	3,894	185.9%
Urban Agglomerations (UA)	384	475	23.7%
Urban Outgrowths (OGs)	962	981	1.95%

Table 1.2.2 Size Classification of Town in India

Class	Population Range	No. of Towns (2001)	No. of Towns (2011)	% of Population (2001)	% of Population (2011)
I	1 lakh and above	393	505	68.67%	60.4%
II	50,000 – 99,999	401	605	9.67%	11%
III	20,000 – 49,999	1,151	1,905	12.23%	15.4%
IV	10,000 – 19,999	1,344	2,233	6.48%	8.5%
V	5,000 – 9,999	888	2,187	2.36%	4.2%
VI	Less than 5,000	191	498	0.23%	0.5%

than ordinary provincial towns.

In the modern world, the meaning has become broader. Today, any major city may be called a metropolis, even if it is not a capital city. For example, in the United States, many state capitals are smaller cities, while the largest cities in the state

Table 1.2.3 Classification and Definition of Urban Areas in India

Category	Definition / Criteria (2011 Census)	Notes / Updates
Statutory Town (ST)	Places with municipal bodies (e.g., municipality, corporation, cantonment board)	Based on legal status granted by state governments; purely administrative classification.
Census Town (CT)	1. Population ≥ 5,000 2. ≥ 75% male workers in non-agricultural activities 3. Density ≥ 400/km²	Reflects functional urban characteristics even without statutory status. Significant growth from 1,362 (2001) to 3,894 (2011).
Classified Towns	By population: • Class I: >100,000 • Class II: 50,000–99,999 • Class III: 20,000–49,999 • …and so on down to <5,000	Helps in tiering and targeted policy in urban planning.
City	Urban area with population ≥ 100,000 (1 lakh)	A general threshold for "city" status in Indian context.
Urban Agglomeration (UA)	Contiguous urban spread of a statutory town and its outgrowths, or adjacent towns with outgrowths; total population ≥ 20,000	Captures urban sprawl and satellite towns.

Metropolitan Area	Area with population > 1 million; can be declared by state for policing under CrPC 1973	Reflects broader functional zones, used for planning, policing, and infrastructure.
Proposed Redefinition	NITI Aayog suggests new framework using economic indicators and land-use patterns to redefine urban boundaries	Expected to better reflect actual urban growth and peri-urban expansion.

are often not capitals. In such cases, the surrounding suburban and urban areas are included together to form what is called a greater metropolitan area. Following ancient traditions, a state capital can still be called a metropolis, but in modern usage, the term also applies to any city that is an important political, cultural, or economic centre, not necessarily all three.

In India, according to the Census, a city with a population of more than 1 million (10 lakh) is considered a metropolis. The 2001 Census recorded 35 million-plus cities with a combined population of 107.88 million, which was 37.8% of India's total urban population. When identifying metropolitan cities, the Census counts the population of the entire urban agglomeration, not just the central municipal corporation. This means that most metropolises include a large core city along with smaller towns or cities around it. For example:

- Smallest metropolis in 2001: Rajkot (1,002,106 people)
- Largest metropolis in 2001: Greater Mumbai (16,368,084 people) — 16 times bigger than Rajkot

The Census of India classifies metropolises into four categories:

1. 1,000,000 – 1,999,999 people
2. 2,000,000 – 4,999,999 people
3. 5,000,000 – 9,999,999 people
4. 10,000,000 people and above

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) covers all metropolitan cities along with other large cities. According to the 2001 Census, India had six mega cities (population over 5 million each):

1. Delhi
2. Greater Mumbai
3. Kolkata
4. Chennai
5. Bangalore
6. Hyderabad

Sociologist and urban historian Lewis Mumford classified the growth of European cities into several stages based on their level of development and function:

1. **Eopolis:** This refers to the earliest form of settlements, resembling a village with an agricultural economy. It was a pre-urban stage.
2. **Polis:** In this stage, people began to specialise in different jobs, and mechanisation started to emerge. It was more organised than a village and showed early signs of urban life.
3. **Metropolis:** A metropolis is a large, dominant city, often seen as a centre of trade, culture, and governance.

4. **Megalopolis:** This stage represents the beginning of urban problems due to overpopulation, pollution, and mismanagement. It signals the early stages of urban decline.

5. **Tyrannopolis:** A city facing serious problems such as economic collapse, crime, and political instability. Power is often concentrated in the hands of a few, such as warlords or tyrants.

6. **Necropolis:** This term, meaning "city of the dead," describes a city that is in complete decline due to war, disease, or massive out-migration. People leave for rural areas, and the city becomes lifeless.

1.2.5.1 Metropolitan and Cosmopolitan Cities

A metropolitan city is a large city with a dense urban core and surrounding suburban or rural areas that are socially and economically connected to it. In India, a city with a population of over 1 million (10 lakhs) is considered a metropolitan city, while cities with more than 10 million people are known as megacities. Metropolitan areas are important hubs for transport, industry, education, and governance. For example, the New York Metropolitan Area includes New York City and its nearby regions.

On the other hand, a cosmopolitan city is one where people from different parts of the world live together. The term comes from the Greek word kosmopolites, meaning "citizen of the world." Such cities are marked by diversity in language, religion, food, and lifestyle. People living in cosmopolitan cities are often considered open-minded, tolerant, and culturally sophisticated. Cities like Mumbai, New York, and London are both metropolitan and cosmopolitan because they are large and also culturally diverse. However, some cities may be metropolitan but not cosmopolitan, such as Surat in Gujarat, which is large but more culturally homogeneous.

1.2.5.2 Features of a Metropolitan Region

A metropolitan region, often called a "metro," includes a major city and its surrounding towns or municipalities. This region is usually centred around a highly populated city that acts as a hub for transportation, business, and governance. Some key characteristics of a metropolitan region are:

- A central city that acts as the main hub for transport and economic activities.
- The presence of advanced industries and services that support economic growth.
- Well-developed infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals, and housing.
- A mix of administrative units such as districts or municipalities, which are connected to each other economically and socially.

According to Dirk Bronger (2004), a metropolis has the following features:

1. A population of at least one million people.
2. A population density of at least 2,000 people per square kilometre.
3. A monocentric structure, meaning the city has a clear centre from which most important activities are controlled.

A metropolis plays a dominant role in the urban system of a country. It influences politics, economy, and culture on a national level. Cities like Paris and London are classic examples of such metropolises. In India, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai are considered major metropolitan cities.

The concept of metropolisation refers to the process by which cities grow in importance and centralise various functions and populations. However, the impact of metro culture is mostly felt in the nearby areas of these cities, while the influence becomes weaker in regions farther away.

1.2.6 Megalopolis

A megalopolis is a group of closely connected, well-developed cities that form a continuous urban area. The word "megalopolis" comes from Greek, meaning "great city." It was first used in the early 20th century but became widely known after being popularised by Jean Gottmann, who described it as a super-metropolitan region made up of many merging cities or conurbations.

These large urban regions often develop due to several factors:

- Some areas naturally attract more population and development.
- Geographic features and good transportation networks (both international and regional) encourage growth.
- Economic growth in one city can benefit nearby cities, helping them to grow as well.

One of the earliest and most well-known examples of a megalopolis is found in the north-eastern United States, stretching from Boston to Washington D.C. This is called the Bos-Wash Megalopolis.

The main feature of a megalopolis is its strong urban character or "urbanness." Across such a region, there are:

- Office buildings, shopping centres, factories, and housing complexes.
- Residential neighbourhoods, gas stations, and service areas.
- Cultural spaces like museums, libraries, and recreational parks.

Although the area is highly urbanised, there are also many green spaces such as parks and recreational lands. Despite the different types of cities involved, megalopolises are united by their shared urban features and functions.

However, megalopolises also face some urban problems:

- Traffic congestion,
- Air pollution,
- Old and deteriorating buildings, and
- Overcrowded living spaces.

Still, the combination of economic opportunity, cultural diversity, and urban infrastructure gives these regions unique importance in national and global development.

1.2.7 Suburb

Suburbs are residential areas located near cities but outside the central urban zone. They developed as more people began to move away from crowded, expensive, and often poor inner-city areas. However, these people still needed to stay close enough to cities for work and other needs. As a result, suburbs emerged in the mid-19th century, especially around the 1850s, when city populations grew rapidly and transportation systems improved. Suburbs offered more space and better living conditions while still being close enough for daily travel to the city.

For many years, suburbs did not receive much attention from sociologists, even though a large number of people lived and worked there. Sociologist Mark Baldassare (1992) noted that despite the importance of suburbs in American life, they were understudied. In recent decades, however, sociologists have

become more interested in suburbs because of changes in who lives there. Increasing numbers of poor people, immigrants, and Black Americans have moved to the suburbs. Some were pushed out of city centres during the Great Recession and housing crisis, while others became poor while already living in suburban areas.

The makeup of suburbs has also changed due to immigration and internal migration. Since 1965, many immigrants have moved directly to suburbs instead of central cities. Today, most immigrants in the United States live in suburban areas. Additionally, a reverse migration of Black Americans from northern cities to the southern United States has led to growing Black suburban communities in the South.

These changes indicate that suburbs are no longer solely inhabited by the white middle class, as is commonly imagined. In popular culture, suburbs are often depicted as quiet neighbourhoods with large houses, green lawns, multiple cars, and basketball hoops in driveways. While this image may still exist in some areas, suburbs today are much more diverse in terms of race, class, and lifestyle. Scholars have noted that Black Americans have lived in suburban areas for over a century and that suburbs vary greatly by social class.

Sociologists now recognise that to understand significant social issues—such as poverty, immigration, inequality, and segregation—we must also examine what is happening in the suburbs. The social dynamics of suburban areas have become a crucial part of understanding modern society.

1.2.8 Exurb

The term exurb refers to residential areas that exist beyond the suburban belt, lying at the edges of metropolitan regions but still connected to them through economic and social linkages. The concept was first popularised in the United States, where rapid urban sprawl after World War II created new settlement patterns outside the traditional city-suburb divide. Unlike rural villages, exurbs are not isolated from cities. They are deeply connected to metropolitan centres, primarily because a significant portion of their residents commute to cities for employment, education, and services. In this sense, exurbs represent a hybrid form of settlement—rural in appearance but urban in dependence.

In American urban studies, exurbs are often visualised as a distinct ring or zone surrounding metropolitan areas, located between suburbs and the rural countryside. Carruthers and Vias (2005), for instance, classified settlements into four spatial types—urban, suburban, exurban, and rural—placing exurbs as an intermediate category. They are characterised by lower density than suburbs but higher than rural villages, as well as strong economic and commuting linkages to nearby cities. In practice, most exurbs are located around 50–70 miles away from a metropolitan core, making them accessible but still outside the typical suburban commuting belt.

The growth of exurbs in the United States has been driven by multiple factors, such as the search for affordable housing, the desire for larger plots of land, and the appeal of a semi-rural lifestyle. During the late 20th century, many families moved to exurban areas because they offered a compromise between the open spaces of the countryside and the job opportunities of the city. At one point, estimates suggested that nearly one-quarter of the American population lived in exurban zones. These areas often attracted middle-class, white, and predominantly homeowner populations who sought better schools, safer environments, or more space than what was available in suburbs or inner cities.

In contrast, the phenomenon of exurbanisation has been far less pronounced in Europe. European cities are generally denser, more compact, and shaped by planning policies that promote polycentric urban forms rather than scattered sprawl. Higher transportation costs and stricter land-use regulations have also limited the growth of exurbs. Instead of the term "exurb," European researchers often use expressions such as peri-urban areas or urban fringe to describe similar spaces where the boundaries of city and countryside blur. While similarities exist, the European pattern tends to emphasise mixed land use, smaller commuting zones, and stronger integration with urban planning.

Scholars have debated the exact definition of exurbs because the line between suburban and exurban areas is often blurry. For some, exurbs are simply "outer suburbs" that differ in degree but not in kind. Others, however, insist that exurbs should be identified by three criteria: their location beyond suburbs, their relatively low residential density, and their strong economic dependence on the metropolitan region. These debates highlight the fluidity of urban boundaries and the difficulty of categorising spaces that are neither fully urban nor fully rural.

Exurbs also carry important social and political dimensions. Sociologists have noted that exurban residents often combine a rural lifestyle with urban-oriented aspirations. They may prefer living in detached houses surrounded by farmland or forests but still rely on cities for jobs, healthcare, and cultural activities. Politically, exurban areas in the United States have sometimes been identified as distinct voting blocs, often leaning towards conservative values while maintaining an economic dependence on metropolitan regions. This has made them influential in shaping electoral outcomes and policy debates.

From an ecological and planning perspective, exurban growth has been widely criticised. Expanding low-density settlements consume large tracts of farmland and forest, disrupt ecosystems, and threaten biodiversity. It also leads to high energy consumption and rising carbon footprints, as most exurban residents depend on cars for commuting. Furthermore, the cost of providing infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and public services tends to be higher in exurbs than in compact urban neighbourhoods. At the same time, some scholars point out that exurban communities may foster new forms of social networks, local participation, and alternative lifestyles, especially in an era of remote work that reduces the need for daily commuting.

In contemporary urban sociology, the term "exurb" has declined in popularity since the 2000s. Researchers have increasingly turned to other concepts such as post-suburbia, edge cities, or reurbanisation to capture the changing forms of settlement around metropolitan regions. Yet, exurbs remain a useful category for analysing urban sprawl, land-use change, and lifestyle migration. They continue to represent a space where urban and rural characteristics overlap, creating both opportunities and challenges for society.

In simple terms, exurbs can be understood as low-density residential areas located beyond suburbs—rural in appearance but urban in function. They are products of social aspirations, economic forces, and planning choices, and their study remains vital for understanding the evolving nature of cities in the modern world.

Exurbs and the process of exurbiation in India represent an important trend in urban growth. Exurbs are settlements located beyond the suburbs of a city, often at the rural–urban edge. They attract people who wish to live in quieter, less congested areas

while still being connected to the city for work, education, and services. Exurbiation in India is growing due to improvements in transport networks, highways, and digital connectivity, which allow people to commute or even work remotely. For example, areas like Manesar near Delhi, Sriperumbudur near Chennai, and Rajarhat near Kolkata have seen rapid growth as exurban zones. These regions often begin as small villages or agricultural areas but are transformed by real estate development, industrial corridors, or IT parks. While exurbs provide opportunities for affordable housing and new economic activities, they also face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, pressure on land, and environmental concerns. Thus, the study of exurbs and exurbiation helps us understand how India's urbanisation is spreading beyond traditional city boundaries into new rural–urban spaces.

1.2.9 Urbanisation in Kerala

Kerala is regarded as the fastest urbanising state. Among the districts, Ernakulam has the highest proportion of urban population to the total population (68.1 per cent), while Wayanad (3.8 per cent) has the lowest. The increasing urbanisation in Kerala is evident in the number of census towns in Census 2011. A census town is defined as an area that is not statutorily notified as a town but has attained urban characteristics, namely population that exceeds 5,000, a population density of at least 400 persons per sq. km, and a minimum of 75 per cent of the male working population employed outside the agricultural sector. In the 2001 Census, there were 99 census towns and 60 statutory towns in Kerala. According to Census 2011, there are 461 census towns and 59 statutory towns, indicating a 366 per cent increase in the number of census towns. Wayanad and Idukki districts had no census towns in 2011 but had one statutory town each (Economic Review 2024). Thrissur District, with 135 towns (statutory + census), has the highest number of towns in the state and accounts for more than 25 per cent of the total cities in the state. Around 60 per cent of towns are located in Thrissur, Kannur, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode districts. The urban population has surpassed one million in each of eight districts, with Ernakulam closely followed by Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Malappuram.

1.2.9.1 Suburb and Exurb in Kerala

In Kerala, the concept of exurbs is particularly evident due to the state's unique pattern of settlement, where urban and rural areas are closely interwoven. Unlike in many other states, Kerala does not have large cities surrounded by distinct suburbs; instead, it features a continuous spread of small towns and villages with urban characteristics. Exurban growth can be observed in areas that lie beyond the core cities, yet remain strongly connected through highways and transport routes. For instance, places like Angamaly and Perumbavoor on the outskirts of Kochi or Chengannur and Adoor near Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam have rapidly developed as exurban zones. These regions attract residents due to better housing options, lower living costs, and easy access to city centres. Many IT professionals and middle-class families working in Kochi's Infopark or Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram opt to live in these exurban locations, balancing city employment with quieter surroundings. However, this spread of exurban growth also presents challenges in Kerala, such as increased traffic congestion, pressure on land, and the decline of traditional agricultural activities.

Recap

- The rural–urban continuum views settlements as existing on a spectrum. Social complexity increases as areas become more urban.
- The trait complex approach compares rural and urban areas using measurable features, including population density, occupations, and cultural uniformity.
- Redfield's ideal type approach contrasts folk societies with urban societies. Folk societies are close-knit, while urban societies are individualistic and diverse. Critics argue that this view is too simplistic.
- Cities are defined using several criteria, including legal status, a population of over 5,000, high density, and non-agricultural occupations.
- Urban growth is explained by three major theories: Burgess proposed concentric zones, Hoyt emphasised transport-based sectors, and Harris and Ullman suggested multiple urban centres.
- Global cities like New York and London control the world economy. They host financial markets and corporate headquarters, while also producing sharp social inequalities.
- Primate cities dominate national urban systems, being significantly larger than other cities. Mumbai and Bangkok combine political, economic, and cultural roles.
- The Indian Census classifies towns into statutory towns and census towns. Census towns exhibit urban features but lack municipal status, and their number is increasing rapidly.
- Metropolitan cities have over one million people; while megacities have more than ten million. Both face serious challenges in housing, infrastructure, and services.
- Suburbs developed as residential areas outside crowded cities, while exurbs are low-density settlements at the city edge that remain economically linked to cities.
- Exurban growth around Delhi and Bengaluru reflects improved transport and new work patterns; however, infrastructure development often lags behind.
- Urban classification models assist in city analysis. Examples include Taylor's stages and Mumford's historical model, which require adjustment for global diversity.

Objective Questions

1. What term describes settlements ranging from rural to urban?
2. Which approach studies urban traits like population density?
3. Who proposed the Rural-Urban Continuum model?
4. What is the central zone in Burgess's model called?
5. What is a legally recognised town in India called?
6. What population makes an Indian "city"?
7. Which city type dominates a country's urban system?
8. What sector dominates post-industrial cities?
9. What term describes interconnected metropolises?
10. What classification has ≥75% non-farm workers?
11. Which theory uses wedge-shaped urban growth?
12. What are low-density areas beyond suburbs called?

Answers

1. Continuum
2. Trait
3. Redfield
4. CBD
5. Statutory
6. 100,000
7. Primate

8. Service

9. Megalopolis

10. Census

11. Sector

12. Exurbs

Assignments

1. *"Redfield's Rural-Urban Continuum oversimplifies the complexities of modern settlements."* Critically evaluate this statement with examples from both developed and developing countries.

2. Compare and contrast Burgess's Concentric Zone Theory with Harris and Ullman's Multiple Nuclei Theory. Which model better explains urban growth in 21st-century cities? Support your answer with case studies.

3. Select one Indian metropolis (e.g., Mumbai, Delhi, or Bengaluru) and analyse how its growth aligns (or diverges) from Griffith Taylor's or Lewis Mumford's stages of urban development.

4. *"India's distinction between statutory towns and census towns creates governance challenges."* Discuss this statement with reference to infrastructure gaps, funding disparities, and the 2011 Census data.

5. Examine the rise of exurbs in India. How do factors suchas remote work, highway development, and real estate expansion contribute to this trend? What are its socio-economic and environmental implications?

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BLOCK

Urbanisation

Urbanisation and Sub-urbanisation

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the key concepts, drivers, and historical patterns of urbanization and suburbanization
- analyze the social, economic, and environmental impacts of urban and suburban growth
- critically assess urban development policies and planning interventions

Prerequisite

Before we begin exploring urbanisation and suburbanisation, take a moment to reflect on your own surroundings. Do you live in a busy city, a growing town, or a quieter suburb? What changes have you noticed over the last decade new apartments, expanding roads, or people moving in and out? To fully engage with this unit, it will help if you already understand basic concepts such as migration, industrialisation, population growth, and the structure of rural and urban communities. A general familiarity with sociological perspectives on social change and inequality will also make it easier to connect theory with the real-world patterns you observe daily.

In this unit, we will unpack how and why cities grow, why people continue to shift from rural areas into urban centres, and what happens when cities expand outward into suburbs. Think of urbanisation not just as crowded streets and tall buildings, but as a complex transformation in lifestyles, jobs, opportunities, and community relationships. Likewise, suburbanisation is more than just housing colonies on the city's edge it reflects changing aspirations, new mobility patterns, and evolving social identities shaped by transportation, technology, and planning decisions.

As we move through the lessons, you will be encouraged to compare global trends with what you see in your own city or region. Why do some areas develop

rapidly while others lag behind? Who benefits from suburban growth, and who gets left out? By the end of this unit, you'll be able to understand these processes not as distant academic concepts but as dynamic forces that shape where you live, how you travel, and how society organises itself. Let's explore how our cities and our lives are constantly being reshaped.

Keywords

Urbanism, Urban agglomeration, Suburbs, Peri-urbanisation, POET, Urbanity

Discussion

The term urban was rarely used in English before the nineteenth century. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary gives it a simple definition: relating to life in a town or city. The word comes from the Latin urbs, which the Romans used to describe a city especially Rome itself. Urban thus refers to towns and cities, standing in contrast to rural villages or the countryside. People living in villages are often called "folk," while those living in cities are considered urban residents. Any study of urbanisation must begin with understanding what counts as an "urban area" or "urban centre," since the definitions of a city or town differ across countries and even between different census periods.

2.1.1. Urbanisation

Urbanization is generally understood as the process through which a place and its population acquire the characteristics associated with urban life. In India, the Population Census classifies a settlement as "urban" when at least 70 per cent of its male workforce is employed in non-agricultural activities and when it meets specific criteria related to population size and density. An area is considered urban when it expands in terms of population, density, and diversity, develops urban social, cultural, economic, ecological, physical, and political traits, and is officially recognised as urban by the state authorities.

Certain typical features are commonly used to identify an urban area. These include a predominance of non-agricultural occupations, a large population within a defined space, and high population density. Other indicators are social and cultural diversity, an extensive division of labour, and an economy largely driven by industry, commerce, and tourism. Urban areas also tend to display a concentration of modern facilities such as advanced communication and transportation systems, banking services, educational and health institutions, sports and administrative infrastructures, and civic amenities like electricity, water supply, sanitation, waste management, parking, markets, parks, playgrounds, and public halls.

Urban life is further marked by associations based on contractual or formal relationships rather than kinship ties, alongside a weakening of traditional customs and the emergence of new, more rational value systems. Additionally, urban areas are typically governed by municipal or corporate bodies that function on principles of democratic decentralisation and promote a sense of urban citizenship.

The general characteristics of "urban" areas are often described as ideal types because there is no fixed threshold for these features to define a place as urban. Even if some features are absent, a settlement may still be granted urban status. Urbanization, therefore, is the process through which a non-urban area becomes urban, or a less urbanised area increasingly acquires urban characteristics. During this process, both long-term urban residents and newcomers adapt to urbanism, or the urban way of life. However, it is debatable whether there is a single, universal model of urban life.

Non-European sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the conventional definitions of urbanization, as described above, are predominantly Western and reflect Western ethnocentric perspectives. Studies of urban areas in Africa and Asia have shown that non-Western forms of urbanization exist, shaped by each country's unique historical and social contexts. These urban areas often retain significant elements of their traditional cultural, social, and political practices, and their levels of economic and technological development may differ from Western cities.

As a result, the continuation of traditional social and cultural forms is expected in urban areas outside the West. The availability of civic amenities, the physical appearance of cities, urban structures, and patterns of consumption can vary significantly from Western models, though influences of Western modernity and postmodernity may still be present in the cities of less-developed countries.

2.1.1.1. Pattern of Urbanisation

The level of urbanisation is commonly measured by the proportion of the population living in urban areas relative to the total population, highlighting the human and social aspects of urban growth. However, there are two additional important measures. The first considers the role of towns in serving rural populations: the greater the number of rural residents each town serves on average, the lower the level of urbanisation. Conversely, when towns no longer serve any rural population, urbanisation is considered to have reached its peak. The second measure looks at the distance rural residents must travel to reach the nearest urban centre. Longer distances indicate a lower level of urbanisation, as they reflect fewer and more widely spaced towns. In regions with a well-developed urban network, people travel shorter distances, indicating higher urbanisation.

The Census of India classifies towns based on population size into six categories: Class I (100,000 or more), Class II (50,000–99,999), Class III (20,000–49,999), Class IV (10,000–19,999), Class V (5,000–9,999), and Class VI (below 5,000). Urban studies are generally divided into two areas: urbanism, which examines urban life and its impact on human behaviour, and urbanisation, which focuses on the growth and expansion of cities. Urbanisation encompasses both population concentration within cities and the spread of urban areas into surrounding regions, or suburbanisation.

The study of urbanisation has employed various empirical approaches, including the rank-size rule, which assumes cities are distributed according to a predictable hierarchy; typological classification of cities within a settlement hierarchy; and analyses of functions relative to city size. These approaches mirror broader trends in social science: in the 1960s, urbanisation was often studied using general systems theory, whereas from the 1980s onward, cities began to be analysed as part of networks of global cities. This overview traces the origins of cities and urban life over the past 200 years and highlights the rise of the megacity as a

contemporary focus in urban studies.

2.1.1.2. Related concepts: Urban agglomeration, Suburbs, Peri-urbanisation

Urban Agglomeration (UA)

An urban agglomeration refers to a continuous urban area that includes a town along with its adjoining outgrowths (OGs), or two or more physically connected towns, with or without their outgrowths. According to the 2001 Census, an urban agglomeration is a continuous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining outgrowths, or two or more physically contiguous towns together with or without outgrowths of such towns. It must include at least one statutory town, and the combined population of all its components should be no less than 20,000. In different local contexts, other combinations of towns and settlements that meet the basic requirement of physical contiguity are also considered urban agglomerations. An urban agglomeration must comprise at least one statutory town. Thus, an urban agglomeration is essentially a cluster of urban settlements that are physically and functionally integrated. Examples include the Greater Mumbai Urban Agglomeration and the Delhi Urban Agglomeration.

Suburbanisation and Peri-urbanisation

In ancient and medieval India, walled cities were distinctly separate from the surrounding rural areas. The city's boundaries were clearly marked by walls, moats, and other protective structures, with only a few gates regulating entry and exit. Inside these walls lived urban residents engaged in non-agricultural occupations, while the villages outside were home to rural populations primarily involved in farming and animal husbandry. The division between city and countryside was obvious and sharply defined by the city wall; even in cities without walls, the transition from urban to rural areas was abrupt and clear.

Today, the boundaries of most towns and smaller cities remain well demarcated, with a noticeable shift from urban land use to rural areas. However, in metropolitan cities and some larger urban centres with populations exceeding one lakh, the situation has changed. The physical expansion of built-up areas often extends well beyond municipal limits, frequently in a spontaneous, unplanned manner. Formerly rural villages near these cities have been transformed by the development of urban residential, commercial, and industrial complexes. In many cases, cities have extended deeply into rural regions. Areas where urban and rural land uses coexist are commonly referred to as the rural-urban fringe.

Concept and Definition

In 1950, Charles Zeublin observed that "the future belongs not to the cities but to the suburbs." Suburbanisation has often been seen both as a solution to urban problems and, at times, as a source of urban challenges. The concept of suburbanisation is somewhat ambiguous and not clearly defined. Douglas described a suburb as "a belt of population living in conditions that are roomier than the average city dwelling, yet more crowded than the surrounding countryside, whether inside or outside the city." According to the United States Census, suburbs are areas within the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) but outside the central city.

A suburb generally refers to areas outside the central city yet within the broader urbanised region. The movement of population, business, and industry from city centres to nearby fringe areas a phenomenon of the 20th century is known as suburbanisation. This process represents a redistribution of people and economic activities. Suburbs may be incorporated or unincorporated, but they remain socially and economically

dependent on the central city. Typically, they are densely populated communities located near large metropolitan centres, with urban rather than rural characteristics, non-agricultural economies, and social structures reflecting interdependence with the nearby city. Residents often identify both with their suburb and the central city.

Factors in Suburban Growth

Population: One of the most significant factors driving suburbanisation is population growth, which arises from three main components: natural increase, rural-to-urban migration, and ethnically diverse immigration from abroad. Different components have influenced urban growth at various points in history. While urban researchers often focus on population numbers, they sometimes overlook another crucial aspect the values and preferences of individuals. People's choices regarding lifestyle, housing, and neighbourhood characteristics play a major role in their decisions about where to live.

Organization: Institutions play a key role in determining how and where national resources are allocated. Government programmes, including loans, grants for water and sewer systems, and highway construction, have directly influenced suburban growth. Private institutions have also significantly shaped development in suburban fringe areas.

Environment: The availability, cost, and distribution of resources, as well as land accessibility, affect the location of cities, their growth potential, and the process of suburbanisation.

Technology: Technological advances have been crucial in shaping suburban development. Just as elevators, telephones, telegraphs, and structural steel enabled the rise of skyscrapers and central business districts, innovations like septic tanks, efficient electrification, and the internal combustion engine facilitated the modern suburb. Among these, transportation technologies have had the greatest impact on city spatial structures, enabling population dispersal beyond dense urban cores.

Together, these factors Population, Organization, Environment, and Technology (POET) form a framework for analysing suburban growth. A change in any one element affects the others, altering both the pattern and extent of suburbanisation.

In India, a suburb generally refers to an area located on the outskirts of a metropolitan city. The rapid growth of major cities has led to spatial expansion, often extending into neighbouring rural areas in an unplanned and irregular manner. A suburb does not need to be a legally recognised town or administrative unit. Cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai are connected to surrounding areas through suburban railway networks, linking numerous stations. This creates a reverse flow from the city to rural areas, integrating agricultural land and peripheral villages for residential or industrial purposes. Urban residents often move to these areas seeking more affordable housing, leading to the development of residential colonies, sometimes referred to as "dormitory towns."

These suburbs form part of the rural-urban fringe, and some may fall outside municipal taxation and regulations, encouraging new housing developments (e.g., Mira Road). Many of these areas lack basic amenities and do not have a separate administrative identity, yet residents identify with the city, and services like telephone and postal systems treat them as part of the urban area. Social organisation within suburbs varies according to class, but most suburbs are primarily residential, with inhabitants commuting to the city for work and other services these are called suburbs of consumption. Others provide local employment through small- and medium-scale industries and are referred to

as suburbs of production.

In reality, suburbs exhibit a rural-urban dualism rather than a strict separation. Accessibility to the city is crucial to their significance. Suburbanisation, a relatively recent phenomenon in India, results from metropolitisation, with urban centres anchored in industrial and tertiary economic activities. As cities expand beyond their capacity to accommodate people and activities, the metropolis spills over into the surrounding countryside, incorporating interdependent villages and even smaller towns into its built-up area.

The Rural-Urban Fringe and Periurbanisation

In ancient and medieval India, walled cities were distinctly separated from the surrounding rural areas. The boundaries of these cities were clearly marked by walls, moats, and other defensive structures, with only a few gates controlling entry and exit. Within the walls lived urban residents engaged in non-agricultural occupations, while people in the surrounding villages primarily worked in agriculture and animal husbandry. The city and countryside were sharply divided by the visible city walls, and even in places without walls, the boundary between urban and rural areas was abrupt and easily identifiable.

Today, the boundaries of most towns and smaller cities, including those with populations over one lakh, remain clearly noticeable. A casual observer can often see where urban areas end and rural land begins. However, in metropolitan cities and larger urban centres, the situation has changed. Built-up areas have expanded far beyond municipal limits, often in an unplanned and irregular manner. Rural villages on the outskirts have been transformed by the establishment of urban residential, commercial, and industrial complexes. In many cases, cities have extended deeply into rural regions. Areas exhibiting a mix of urban and rural land uses are commonly referred to as the rural-urban fringe.

Origin of Periurbanisation

The development of the rural-urban fringe around Indian cities is a relatively recent phenomenon, whereas it has been observed around Western cities for much longer. It is generally agreed that before 1950, such fringes did not exist even around India's largest metropolitan areas, mainly due to the slow growth of cities at that time. Small increases in population were typically absorbed within existing residential areas. Only when significant numbers of new migrants arrived did the city's existing spaces become insufficient, prompting physical expansion first through vacant land within the city and later into areas beyond municipal limits. Often, poorer migrants would initially settle in nearby villages and commute to work.

During the British period, some villages near cities were displaced to make way for cantonments and civil lines, a process that continued through the 19th century and, in some cases, up to World War II. Urban expansion during this period was minimal because population growth was low, and civil lines and cantonments, which were sparsely populated, provided adequate space. Native towns were often overcrowded but were restricted from expanding beyond city boundaries.

In the post-independence era, Indian cities experienced rapid and often unplanned expansion. Private land developers, industrialists, and businessmen drove much of this growth, targeting peripheral villages that lacked administrative or political power. Rural populations, often powerless against the financial influence of industrial and commercial elites, frequently accepted

monetary incentives, resulting in visible urban land uses encroaching into rural areas. This physical expansion brought social and economic changes: industries, commercial establishments, administrative offices, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities created jobs for rural residents. Even low-paying or unskilled jobs were welcomed by communities that previously relied on uncertain agricultural livelihoods. For farmers, expanding urban markets provided opportunities to sell produce such as vegetables, fruits, and milk, transforming rural land use and altering the values and lifestyles of traditional rural populations. Over time, these changes gave rise to a semi-urban society, representing a transitional phase between rural and fully urban life.

Periurbanisation: Meaning and Definition

George S. Wehrwein, an American land economist and social scientist, was the first to define the rural-urban fringe in 1942 as the transitional zone between clearly established urban land uses and areas primarily used for agriculture. Blizzard and Anderson offered a more detailed definition, describing it as the area where urban and rural land uses are intermixed, stretching from the point where full city services end to where agricultural activities dominate.

In the context of Indian cities and villages, the areas surrounding a city consist of revenue villages with well-defined boundaries. Villages closer to the city often display a combination of urban and rural characteristics, while villages farther away retain distinctly rural features. Delimiting the rural-urban fringe, therefore, requires identifying villages with mixed characteristics and distinguishing them from purely rural villages. The rural-urban fringe encompasses zones where rural and urban populations and land uses coexist, beginning where agricultural land appears near the city and extending to villages that exhibit urban land uses or have residents who commute daily to the city for work or other purposes.

The Structure of the Rural-Urban Fringe

The city and its surrounding region are primarily made up of two types of administrative units: (a) Municipal towns or Nagar panchayats, and (b) Revenue Villages or Gram Panchayats. Municipal towns vary based on their proximity to the main city. Those located close to the city, especially smaller towns, often lose their separate identity and effectively become part of the larger urban area. In these towns, municipal services are generally similar in quality good or poor to those in the main city. In contrast, municipal towns farther from the city retain their distinct identity and face unique challenges related to urban amenities and transportation.

The non-municipal areas, such as revenue villages or gram panchayats, display considerable variation. Some villages are fully urbanised, with most agricultural land converted for current or potential residential or industrial use. Others are partially urbanised, while some remain entirely rural, with the only connection to the city being daily commuting. Consequently, the rural-urban fringe exhibits a complex and varied structure, reflecting different levels of urban influence and land-use transformation.

The rapid expansion of metropolitan cities has led to the spatial growth of urban areas, often spreading into neighbouring rural regions in an unplanned and irregular manner. This has resulted in a reverse flow of people from the city to the countryside, with agricultural land in peripheral villages being converted for residential and industrial purposes. Urban residents migrate to these newly developed areas in search of more affordable and better housing. Although these areas often lack basic urban amenities, they fall outside municipal taxes and regulations, which encourages new housing developments.

Suburbanisation is essentially a byproduct of metropolitanisation, but it differs in terms of migration patterns and associated challenges. The term "suburb" refers to areas located near the outskirts of a metropolitan city. Suburbs are urbanised centres situated outside, yet within easy access of, the central city. In 1937, T.L. Smith first used the term 'urban fringe' to describe this area outside the administrative limit. In 1940, Salter discussed this as an area where we find a mixture of land use, both urban and rural. T.S. Smith (1931) highlighted the characteristics of the fringe area found between the continuous built-up area and the rural landscape in their own way. R.R. Mayers and J.A. Beagle have described the 'urban fringe' as the zone between the countryside and the city. While they are politically independent, they remain economically and psychologically connected to the metropolis through the services and facilities it provides. Suburbs typically have significant population density, predominantly non-agricultural occupations, and distinct urban lifestyles, including recreation, family life, and education. Suburbs differ from cities in various ways, and there are multiple types of suburbs based on their characteristics.

2.1.2. Urbanism: As a Way of Life

Urbanism refers to the characteristics of cities and the quality of life within them, focusing on how urban environments shape human interactions and social organisation. Early urban theorists, witnessing the dramatic social changes caused by industrialisation and rapid urban growth, believed that city life could lead to both personal and social disorganisation individuals might struggle to cope with the fast pace and stimuli of urban living, while traditional family structures and social norms could break down. These debates continue to influence urban studies today, especially as new urban forms and expanding megacities in the developing world place increasing pressure on urban populations.

A seminal contribution to the study of urbanism was made by Louis Wirth, an American sociologist trained under Robert Park and Ernest Burgess at the University of Chicago. In his 1938 work, Urbanism as a Way of Life, Wirth summarised the Chicago School's perspectives on cities and sought to develop a theory of urbanism. He argued that urban life is shaped by three key variables: size, density, and heterogeneity. Compared to rural areas, cities have larger and more diverse populations concentrated in a limited space. These factors interact to create a distinctive urban way of life. A larger population fosters division of labour and specialisation, while higher density accelerates social interaction and competition. Immigration and the concentration of individuals with different skills and cultural backgrounds further increase urban heterogeneity.

Urbanism provides opportunities for personal fulfilment through interactions with others who share similar interests. Yet, Wirth argued that the overall effect of urban life tends toward social disorganisation: intimate personal relationships are replaced by impersonal secondary associations, creating a sense of isolation or anomie, despite constant social contact. Early Chicago School studies highlighted these effects in research on homeless populations, street gangs, and slums. Critics, however, including thinkers like Simmel and Tönnies, noted that many of the changes attributed to urbanisation were actually consequences of modernity and industrial capitalism. Industrial employment drew people from rural areas into cities and competitive, impersonal relationships, which in turn contributed to family breakdown, erosion of primary social ties, and social alienation.

In his essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life", Louis Wirth argued that the modern world is more urban than what is suggested by

the proportion of people living in cities, meaning the influence of urban life cannot be fully captured by urbanisation statistics alone. Urbanity is shaped more by secondary social contacts than by primary, close-knit relationships. Although it is often interpreted in line with Tönnies' concept of society (Gesellschaft) rather than community (Gemeinschaft), urbanity is not solely defined by population density or diversity, and there is no universal agreement on its exact components.

The concept of urbanity in urban studies draws attention to city residents their movements across time and space, everyday experiences, changing perceptions, and, as Georg Simmel described, the "intensification of nervous stimulation." Elements such as city spaces and landscapes, the urban spirit, and both tangible and symbolic identity markers accumulated over time are widely recognised as central to the idea of urbanity. Beyond these official definitions, new forms of urbanity emerge informally. The notion remains relevant in the shared experiences and mental frameworks of residents, visitors, and other city users, a process that is increasingly accelerated by the mediatisation of modern society.

2.1.3. Urban Social Structure

The terms "city" and "urban" are often used interchangeably, as both generally refer to similar concepts. A city is not just a collection of buildings; it represents the convergence of businesses, associations, and institutions that have developed over time. There is a clear link between the size and complexity of a city and the culture it produces and transmits.

Tracing the history of cities is complex due to their varied development. Ancient Greek and Mesopotamian civilisations used terms like "civitas" and "urbs" to refer to the religious and political groupings of families and tribes. Today, urban life is recognised as a distinct style of living that dates back to the 17th century. Compared to villages, cities are larger, more complex, heterogeneous, and impersonal.

Social theorists such as Gordon Childe and Max Weber argued that marketplaces and the traders who frequent them are central to the existence of cities. Besides markets, cities also include religious, political, economic, technological, and administrative centres. Migration plays a key role in urbanisation, bringing together people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Urban dwellers organise themselves in complex institutions such as hospitals, banks, courts, shopping malls, and supermarkets, which are largely absent in rural areas. Other notable features of cities include size, complexity, diversity, anonymity, and impersonal social relations.

Demographically, urban areas are defined by population size and density. In India, the Census classifies cities as follows: Class I (population over 1 lakh), Class II (50,000–1 lakh), Class III (20,000–50,000), Class IV (10,000–20,000), Class V (5,000–10,000), and towns with fewer than 5,000 people at the bottom. Another way to define urban structure is through the ecological approach, which borrows from biology. It studies how humans compete for space and resources in a changing environment, with stronger individuals occupying the most advantageous areas. Urban functions like residential areas, markets, political institutions, and business centres are spatially arranged according to ecological principles.

The socio-cultural approach is also essential for defining urban social structure, focusing on the cultural, psychological, and social interactions of urban residents. Louis Wirth, in his paper "Urbanism as a Way of Life," defined urbanisation as a process of change closely linked to migration. Cities,

he argued, become cultural mosaics due to the influx of people from different regions, creating a unique urban culture. Urban areas are marked by population heterogeneity, with people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, speaking various languages, following different diets, and wearing different styles of clothing. This diversity is especially visible in metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai and contrasts sharply with the more homogeneous social structure of rural areas. The large population size, density, and cultural diversity are defining characteristics of urban life.

2.1.3.1 Characteristics of Urban Life

Urban and rural populations differ markedly in terms of lifestyle and social organisation. While most studies on urbanisation focus on Western contexts, many of these features are increasingly visible in contemporary Indian cities. Understanding these general characteristics helps in analysing how urban life differs from rural life.

1. **Population Size and Density:** Urban areas have significantly larger populations than rural areas. Industrialisation and the search for better living standards drive migration to cities, resulting in high population density.

2. **Heterogeneity:** Cities are characterised by diversity. Residents come from different socio-economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, which leads to variation in food habits, clothing, customs, and values unlike the relatively homogeneous rural communities.

3. **Impersonal Social Interaction:** Urban interactions are often formal, limited, and purpose-driven. Unlike rural areas, where face-to-face and personal relationships dominate, city interactions occur in institutions like hospitals, malls, banks, or universities and are typically transient.

4. **Anonymity:** Large urban populations foster anonymity. People in cities often do not know or engage with their neighbours, creating a sense of being strangers in the community, intensified by the heterogeneous mix of people from various classes, castes, and ethnic groups.

5. **Rationality:** Urban relationships are largely contractual and based on practical or rational considerations. People assess potential benefits before entering social or professional interactions, such as hiring professionals or signing business contracts.

6. **Individualism:** Freed from traditional social constraints like caste, class, or community norms, urban residents develop a sense of individualism, making choices and living independently according to personal preferences.

7. **Secular Outlook:** Exposure to diverse populations and lifestyles encourages tolerance and secular attitudes among city dwellers. Traditional religious rituals often lose significance, making urban populations generally more open to different cultural practices.

8. **Division of Labour:** Urban areas exhibit greater specialisation due to higher material and social densities (as per Émile Durkheim). Industrialisation and complex social interactions promote trade, professional specialisation, and the division of labour, unlike rural communities where roles are less differentiated.

While these characteristics distinguish urban from rural life, studies in the Indian context have shown that certain assumptions of Western urban sociology such as the decline of family structures, weakening caste

systems, or erosion of religious values do not fully apply, as Indian cities retain strong cultural traditions. Future discussions will focus on urban family, caste, class, emerging trends, and urban disparities.

2.1.3.2. Urban Family in India

Urbanisation is a significant driver of social change in India, influencing economic, political, cultural, and social spheres. Traditional social institutions, including family, marriage, caste, and class, are experiencing modifications. While core values continue to influence urban society, new ideas and lifestyles are increasingly shaping family structures in cities.

1. Urban Family Structure

Contrary to popular belief, urbanisation does not automatically convert joint families into nuclear ones. Studies by sociologists such as K. M. Kapadia, I. P. Desai, A. M. Shah, and R. Mukherjee indicate that joint families continue to exist in cities, and families often alternate between nuclear and joint forms over time. Traditional joint families are adapting to urban and industrial environments, showing structural coherence with the demands of city life.

2. Changes in Urban Family System

Urban families are generally smaller, but wider family networks remain important. Kinship ties extend beyond cities, with urban residents depending on rural relatives for support and vice versa. Key changes in urban family structure include:

Smaller family sizes are often limited to two children due to family planning.

- Delegation of traditional family roles to external agencies (e.g., childcare in crèches, food from restaurants, medical care in hospitals).
- Increased women's employment and economic independence, enhancing their social status.
- Looser marital and sexual norms, with growing acceptance of inter-caste, inter-religious, inter-regional, and same-sex relationships.
- Preference for conjugal over extended kinship relations.
- Higher marriage age due to career focus, the rise of court marriages, and gradual separation of marriage from strict religious rituals.
- Increased instances of divorce, indicating weakening family control.
- Dowry remains prevalent despite modernisation, occasionally leading to social issues like dowry deaths.

3. Agencies Supporting Urban Family Functions

Modern urban families rely on external institutions to perform traditional family roles:

- Hospitals & Women's Clinics: Provide professional maternal and child healthcare.
- Baby Clinics & Crèches: Offer specialised childcare for working parents.
- Babysitters/Nannies: Assist in child-rearing and household management.
- Public Assistance: Government and social organisations support the elderly, disabled, unemployed, and orphaned, reducing the family's direct burden.
- Entertainment & Services: Restaurants, clubs, theatres, and other facilities cater to social and recreational needs.

4. Disorganisation of Urban Family

Urban families face increasing

disorganisation, reflected in:

- **Lack of cohesiveness:** Individualism and technology reduce emotional and social bonding.
- **Loss of family control:** Younger members seek independence, weakening elder authority.
- **Conflict:** Reduced cohesion leads to more frequent family disputes.
- **Weakening marital bonds:** Divorce rates are rising, and marriage is increasingly seen as a social contract rather than a religious institution.
- **Parent-child conflict:** Generational gaps and declining parental authority contribute to tension.
- **Reduced security:** Emotional and psychological security declines due to family conflicts.

Overall, urban families are shrinking, mutual affection is diminishing, and divorce and individualism are rising, reflecting the complex social transformation driven by urbanisation.

2.1.4. Social Stratification in India

Social stratification exists in varied forms globally. In India, caste represents a rigid system of stratification, historically expressed through occupation, dress, food, and marriage practices. Castes are hereditary, endogamous groups structured around ideas of purity and pollution, which define social distances between groups. While modernisation and urbanisation have reduced caste rigidity, its influence persists in altered forms.

Class, on the other hand, is based on wealth, income, and social status. In urban areas, neighbourhoods often reflect class divisions for example, affluent areas like South Delhi contrast with slums or suburbs housing low-income workers.

2.1.4.1 Caste in Contemporary Urban Society

Traditionally associated with rural agrarian economies, caste has adapted to urban and industrial environments. Urbanisation, modern occupations, and democracy have weakened the strict correlation between caste and class. Sociologists like Ghurye, Gore, D'Souza, Rao, and Beteille highlight that:

- Higher caste does not always correspond to higher class; urban opportunities allow upward mobility regardless of caste.
- Caste identities continue to influence personal life (e.g., marriage) even when professional life is secular.
- Urban caste associations help members gain education, employment, and political influence, and often function like trade unions.
- Rules such as caste-based food restrictions are largely ignored in cities due to restaurants, domestic help, and professional environments.
- Q`122Caste endogamy still exists, but education, occupation, and inter-caste or inter-regional considerations are increasingly important, especially in love marriages.

Class and Urban Neighbourhoods

Urban settlements are shaped by caste, class, language, and ethnicity. Migrants often preserve distinct cultural identities amidst urban heterogeneity:

- Studies show variable adjustment of migrant communities (e.g., Tamil migrants in Mumbai adapt better than others).
- Neighbourhoods often form along

linguistic or regional lines, preserving ethnic cohesion.

- Intergroup interactions and boundaries remain significant, reflecting community solidarity in urban settings.

Kinship and Family Continuity

Urbanisation has not completely disrupted kinship structures:

- Urban residents maintain ties to ancestral villages and traditional customs.
- Studies in North India and cities like Meerut show that kinship and family patterns resemble those in rural areas.
- There is no sharp cultural divide between urban dwellers and rural peasants, as traditional family and kinship systems continue to influence urban life.

2.1.4.2. Social Classes in Urban India

In urban India, social classes are broadly categorised into four groups: capitalists, professional classes, petty traders and unorganised workers, and the working class. The capitalist or commercial and industrial class emerged during British rule when trade and production expanded, creating a commercial middle class engaged in import-export activities. Over time, many of these merchants invested in modern industries, leading to the rise of mill and mine owners. After independence, private players continued to dominate agriculture, trade, and industry, while the government managed heavy industries. Today, prominent industrial families like Tata, Birla, Ambani, and Adani hold a significant share of the country's resources.

The professional class developed with the introduction of modern education by the British. This group includes lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, scientists, and other educated professionals connected to commerce, industry, and finance. Post-independence industrialisation and urbanisation expanded employment opportunities for this class. However, it is hierarchical, with a wide gap between highly paid professionals and lower-paid workers.

Petty traders, shopkeepers, and unorganised workers form another major class in urban India. They act as intermediaries between suppliers and consumers and have grown in number due to urban population expansion. Many uneducated and unskilled/ semi-skilled rural migrants find employment in the informal sector, such as construction, domestic service, small-scale production, and other manual jobs. They earn low wages and often lack social security benefits. This sector is diverse, including self-employed shopkeepers, street vendors, and informal labourers.

The working class originated during the British industrial period, consisting mainly of rural peasants and artisans who migrated to cities for employment in modern industries like railways, plantations, and textiles. This group is heterogeneous, encompassing workers in various sectors, and has continued to expand with industrial growth in post-independence India.

Recap

- The term *urban* was rarely used in English before the nineteenth century.
- Urbanisation is generally understood as the process through which a place and its population acquire the characteristics associated with urban life.
- An urban agglomeration refers to a continuous urban area that includes a town along with its adjoining outgrowths (OGs), or two or more physically connected towns, with or without their outgrowths.
- In 1950, Charles Zeublin observed that "the future belongs not to the cities but to the suburbs."
- In India, a suburb generally refers to an area located on the outskirts of a metropolitan city.
- The development of the rural-urban fringe around Indian cities is a relatively recent phenomenon, whereas it has been observed around Western cities for much longer.
- The city and its surrounding region are primarily made up of two types of administrative units: (a) municipal towns or nagar panchayats, and (b) revenue villages or gram panchayats.
- Urbanism refers to the characteristics of cities and the quality of life within them, focusing on how urban environments shape human interactions and social organisation.
- In his essay *"Urbanism as a Way of Life,"* Louis Wirth argued that the modern world is more urban than what is suggested by the proportion of people living in cities, meaning the influence of urban life cannot be fully captured by urbanisation statistics alone.
- Social theorists such as Gordon Childe and Max Weber argued that marketplaces and the traders who frequent them are central to the existence of cities.

Objective Questions

1. The term “urban” is derived from which Latin word?
2. According to the Indian Census, a settlement is considered urban when at least what percentage of its male workforce is engaged in non-agricultural activities?
3. Which is *not* a typical characteristic used to identify an urban area?
4. Who first defined the rural–urban fringe as a transitional zone between urban and agricultural land uses?
5. According to Louis Wirth, which three variables shape urbanism as a way of life?
6. Which factor did Gordon Childe and Max Weber consider central to the existence of cities?
7. According to the Census of India, a town with a population between 20,000 and 50,000 falls under which category?
8. Which is the characteristic of urban social interaction?
9. According to Louis Wirth, cities become cultural mosaics mainly because of
10. Which scholar argued that marketplaces are central to the existence of cities?

Answers

1. Urbs
2. 70%
3. Predominantly agricultural economy
4. Weberwein
5. Size, density, and heterogeneity

6. Marketplaces and traders
7. Class III
8. Impersonal and formal relations
9. Migration from diverse regions
10. Gordon Childe

Assignments

1. Define urbanisation and explain how the Census of India classifies an area as urban. Discuss the key features used to identify an urban area.
2. Describe the concepts of suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation. How do metropolitan expansion and the POET factors contribute to suburban growth in India?
3. Discuss Louis Wirth's theory of "Urbanism as a Way of Life." How do size, density, and heterogeneity shape social relationships and behaviour in cities?
4. Explain the major characteristics that distinguish urban life from rural life. Discuss population size, heterogeneity, impersonal interactions, rationality, individualism, and division of labour in your answer.
5. Describe the changes occurring in the Indian urban family system. How have factors such as women's employment, family planning, external agencies, and changing marriage norms contributed to the transformation of family structures in cities?
6. Discuss the major social classes in urban India. Explain the historical emergence of the capitalist class, the development of the professional class, the role of petty traders and unorganised workers, and the evolution of the working class during and after the British period.

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UNIT

Urbanisation in India

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the historical and contemporary trends of urbanization in India
- analyze the factors influencing urban growth in India
- evaluate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of urbanization
- compare different types of urban settlements and urban forms in India

Prerequisite

Before we dive into the study of urbanisation in India, it is helpful to consider what you already know about cities and towns. Think about the city you live in or have visited: How is it different from a village? What kinds of activities, services, and lifestyles are unique to urban areas? Urbanisation is not just about population growth; it is about how societies organise themselves, how land and resources are used, and how people's lives change in the process. Having a basic understanding of population trends, rural-urban migration, and economic development will make it easier to grasp the complexities of India's urban landscape.

Urbanization in India is a fascinating story of rapid transformation. Over the past century, cities have expanded both in size and influence, giving rise to megacities, metropolitan regions, and suburbs. Unlike in some Western countries, however, urban growth in India has often been unplanned, leading to a mix of modern infrastructure and traditional settlements. As you study this unit, you will explore the causes of urban growth, the patterns of city

expansion, and the emergence of the rural-urban fringe. You will also examine how urbanization affects social life, the economy, and the environment.

Let's engage with the topic deeply: Consider why people move to cities—what drives rural residents to urban centres? How do cities respond to this growth? As you reflect on these questions, you will start to see urbanization not merely as a statistic but as a dynamic process that shapes everyday life. By the end of this unit, you should be able to critically analyse the patterns, causes, and consequences of urbanization in India and understand the challenges and opportunities it presents for planning and policy.

Keywords

Human imagination, Cosmopolitan, Commercialisation, Rural-urban transformation, Rising crime

Discussion

Urbanization refers to the process of becoming urban, which includes moving to cities and shifting from agricultural activities to urban-specific occupations such as trade, manufacturing, industry, management, and the associated changes in lifestyle and behaviour. It is characterised by a gradual increase in the proportion of the population living in urban areas, marking a transition from rural to urban settlement.

In India, the growth of towns has been driven more by the tertiary sector than the secondary (manufacturing) sector. This pattern is somewhat paradoxical compared to industrialised countries, where city expansion was primarily fuelled by manufacturing industries. In India, the major contributors to urban growth have been the transportation, services, and construction sectors, rather than industrial production.

Southern India is more urbanised compared to the northern and eastern regions, largely due to its rich historical, sociocultural, and educational resources. The region experienced rapid urban growth with the onset of globalisation, fuelled by heavy foreign direct investment (FDI) and the establishment of diverse enterprises. While industrialisation and urbanisation are often linked, industrialisation alone does not fully explain urbanisation as a structural process of change.

Urbanization results from a combination of factors, including the development of commercial, financial, and administrative infrastructure, advancements in transportation and communication technologies, and the growth of cultural and recreational activities. It is a key aspect of economic growth, as rising per capita income increases the demand for non-agricultural goods and services. In India, urbanisation is understood as a socio-cultural, economic, and geographic process.

India's urban history dates back to ancient times, beginning with the Harappan urbanism of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Urbanization

in the Harappan period spanned roughly 600 years, from 2350 BC to 1750 BC, with significant urban centres such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro serving as prime examples of early urban development.

The establishment of the British East India Company brought significant changes to the process of urbanisation in India. The first municipal corporation was set up in Madras between 1687 and 1688, followed by municipal corporations in Bombay and Calcutta in 1726. A major resolution in 1882 laid the foundation for municipalities, district boards, taluka boards, and village-level panchayats. Local self-government in India was first implemented under Lord Ripon, the then Viceroy, whose 1882 resolution is often regarded as the Magna Carta of local self-government. Lord Ripon is considered the founder of local self-governance in India.

During British rule, the administration played a pivotal role in shaping India's urban landscape, establishing the three major port cities of Chennai, Kolkata, and Mumbai. The British also developed networks of hill stations in South India and the Himalayas, including Darjeeling, Shimla, Mussoorie, and Lansdowne, and expanded cities through civil lines and cantonments, significantly altering their urban environment. The colonial government's focus on education led to the establishment of colleges and universities in major metropolitan centres, marking the beginning of modern education in India.

After independence, the adoption of a mixed economy and the growth of the private sector further accelerated urbanisation, leading to the rapid expansion of cities and urban centres across the country. The urban population in India grows at a higher pace than the growth rate of its total population. The observation of Kingsley Davis is quite evident in the context of India's urbanisation. The Indian scenario of urbanisation is in an acceleration stage, where economic restructuring and capital investment are evident. Amitabh Kundu (1994, 2003) explained the pattern of urbanisation in India since 1951. Accordingly, urban growth across the size categories presents some interesting features. Until the nineties, Class I cities in developed states grew at a faster rate compared to small and medium towns. In contrast, in the less developed states, small and medium towns grew at a similar or higher rate than that of Class I cities. This pattern changed in the nineties. Many of the less developed states, like Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, and Rajasthan, experienced high urban growth in their Class I cities compared to smaller towns. Cities with a population of over one million registered higher growth than the overall growth of all Class I cities; during 1981-91, a growth rate of 2.96 per cent was recorded, while in 1991-2001, a growth rate of 2.76 per cent was noted. During the same period, million-plus cities grew at rates of 3.25 per cent and 2.88 per cent, respectively. The urban growth rate from 1951 to 1991 was generally high in relatively less developed states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The relatively better developed states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal experienced low urban growth. The developed states like Gujarat, Haryana, and Maharashtra recorded high or medium growth. There was a significant departure from this pattern in the nineties, as the developed states registered urban growth above the national average, while the less developed states experienced growth either below or equal to the country's growth rate.

2.2.1. Origin of Cities in India

Since their inception, cities have continually pushed the boundaries of human imagination. Throughout history, cities have represented the largest concentrations of people and social interactions, ranging from small settlements to vast metropolitan centres,

and from ancient times to the present. In India, urban centres began to emerge around 2500 BC, with remarkable examples like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa standing as silent witnesses to this early urban development.

However, understanding the social and political organisation of these ancient cities remains challenging, as their written language is still largely undeciphered. Consequently, it is unclear whether the rulers of Harappa were primarily traders, priests, or warriors. Due to these limitations, studies of urban development in India often focus on the second phase of urbanisation, beginning around the 6th century BC, when more evidence about urban structures and governance becomes available.

2.2.1.1. Ancient City

Every ancient city possessed unique characteristics, shaped largely by the factors that contributed to its growth. According to Anderson, most ancient cities served as capitals and were primarily oriented towards military purposes. Any trade conducted within these cities was mainly intended to support the state or the ruler's standing army. The priorities of the authorities focused on fulfilling the needs of the state and maintaining the army, including constructing defensive walls and other structures.

The climate and geography played a crucial role in the development of these cities, which is why many were located along coasts or near major rivers. Historically, cities grew in areas with favourable agricultural conditions. Ancient towns functioned largely as political centres, housing kings and their administrations. They were also important centres of education and learning. In India, over 45 towns and cities are recognised as ancient, distinguished by their religious and cultural heritage, which continues to set them apart from more recent urban settlements.

2.2.1.2. Medieval City

During the Middle Ages, cities primarily functioned as commercial centres, serving the needs of wealthy merchants and the trading class. Their populations mainly consisted of traders, their families, and supporting workers. Many of these settlements developed along the coast, and they relied heavily on surrounding rural areas to meet their various needs. Governance in these cities was typically authoritarian, while social life remained largely traditional.

The local king, often a major landowner, encouraged traders, artisans, administrators, and professionals to settle in his fortified capital cities. These skilled workers, though landless and dependent on the king for security, enjoyed considerable freedom, as they were not tied to the land and could resist oppression or excessive taxation. Medieval towns and cities served as connectors within the settlement hierarchy, linking upper and lower tiers. Many nearby towns were of similar hierarchical status, and these cities often functioned as military command centres during periods of conflict.

2.2.1.3. Modern City

During the colonial period, modern cities began to emerge in India, characterised by large populations and diverse social compositions. Contemporary cities serve as major centres of commerce and feature elected governments with complex administrative structures and specialised roles. These cities have a distinctly cosmopolitan character, with a significant portion of the population employed in the service sector and other occupations that were largely absent in earlier urban settlements.

Modern cities also act as hubs of fashion, culture, and non-profit activities, catering to the needs of a large population. A key feature of these cities is social mobility, as they host a variety of groups representing different

cultural identities. They reflect a modern lifestyle and outlook, with urban residents leading lives markedly different from those in rural areas. Additionally, modern cities boast advanced transportation and communication networks, as well as state-of-the-art medical facilities, reinforcing their role as centres of development and opportunity.

Cities grew rapidly, bringing about significant transformations in society. During this period, many towns and cities emerged as the primary residences of rulers and merchants. There were various types of urban settlements, including garrison towns, seaports, administrative capitals, tourist centres, industrial cities, and commercial hubs. Corporate towns, once a distinct form of neighbourhood, have now largely disappeared. Modern Indian cities are characterised by diverse populations and a wide range of simultaneous activities.

The socio-historical development of Indian cities followed a unique trajectory. While the exact origins of some cities remain speculative, understanding their evolution in the context of the colonial period and modernity provides a clearer perspective. Cities developed as outcomes of specific social trends and dynamic processes, particularly influenced by scientific advancements and the accumulation of wealth in the 18th century. During colonial times, urban centres supplied raw materials and consumed imported goods. Many old urban centres transformed over time, with some remaining military outposts and others evolving into hubs of commerce and industry. Although Indian cities expanded alongside large-scale industry and modern capitalism, they often lack several features typical of Western cities.

According to Adna Weber, the concentration of people in cities was largely driven by economic forces that gained prominence during the Industrial Revolution, including innovations such as steam power, mechanisation, and expanded trade and commerce.

Several political factors also contributed to the rise of cities, including:

a. Laws promoting freedom of trade.

b. Legislation supporting freedom of migration.

c. Centralised administration, which positioned people in civic centres.

d. Politically protected free land tenure within cities.

Social factors encouraging urbanisation included:

a. Educational opportunities.

b. Availability of amusements and recreation.

c. Higher standards of living.

d. Opportunities for intellectual engagement.

e. Familiarity with an urban lifestyle.

f. The spread of knowledge about the benefits of city life.

In ancient India, the distinction between villages and towns was not very pronounced. Towns and cities typically developed in response to specific needs and circumstances, with key prerequisites including access to water, defensible locations, food availability, and later, effective communication networks. The earliest urban civilisation in India emerged in the Indus Valley during the third millennium BC, with Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa representing the most advanced urban forms. According to Gordon, the city walls of Mohenjo-Daro were constructed around 2600 BC, and by approximately 600 BC, the Aryan model of urbanisation began to appear.

2.2.2. Growth of Urban Population in India

India has been the fastest-growing major economy in the world, with an average growth rate of 7% between 2017–18 and 2018–19 and a steadily increasing share in global GDP. Its nominal GDP ranks seventh globally, while its purchasing power parity (PPP) places it third [Source: Economic Survey 2018-19]. The Ministry of Finance aims for India to achieve a $5 trillion GDP by 2024 and a $10 trillion economy by 2030.

Currently, India has around 4,400 statutory towns and cities with a population exceeding 400 million. By 2030, the urban population is projected to reach 600 million at the current growth rate (WUP, 2018). The 2011 Census recorded 53 Indian cities with populations over one million. By 2050, over 50% of the population is expected to live in urban areas (WUP, 2018). Some estimates suggest that India needs to build a city the size of Chicago every year to accommodate urban growth, and over the next decade, its cities will see an influx of people comparable to the entire population of the USA.

Historically, urbanisation in India has grown steadily: in 1901, only 11.4% of Indians lived in urban areas, rising to 28.53% by 2001. According to the World Bank, 34% of the population currently resides in urban areas, and UN projections indicate 40.76% by 2030. By 2050, India is expected to lead global urban population growth, followed by China, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the USA. Major cities like Mumbai have been primary destinations for rural-urban migration throughout the 20th century; Mumbai had 22.1 million residents in 2018, while Delhi, with 28 million residents, is recorded as the most urbanised city in the world according to the 2011 Census.

Until 1800, over 90% of the global population lived in rural areas. In the United States, urbanisation accelerated throughout the 19th century, reaching 40% by 1900, 64% by 1950, and nearly 80% by 2000. Despite this rapid growth, Japan experienced an even faster urbanisation rate. Until the 20th century, Japan's urban population was low, barely exceeding 10% by 1900. However, it grew rapidly to over 50% by 1950, nearly 80% by 2000, and has now surpassed the U.S., with over 90% of the population living in urban areas today.

China and India followed similar urbanisation trends until the late 1980s, with roughly one in four people living in urban areas in both countries. Since then, China's urban population has grown dramatically during the 1990s and 2000s, more than doubling to 58%. India's urbanisation, by contrast, has increased steadily, and today approximately one in three Indians (33%) reside in urban areas.

2.2.2.1 Trends in Urbanisation

Today, more people live in cities than in rural areas worldwide. In 2018, about 55% of the global population lived in urban settings around 4.2 billion people, compared with 3.4 billion living in rural regions. Since 1950, the world has experienced a rapid shift toward urban living. At that time, 70% of the global population resided in rural settlements. A major milestone occurred in 2007, when for the first time in history the number of people in urban areas surpassed those in rural areas. Since then, the urban population has continued to grow at a faster rate than the rural population. By 2030, the proportion of people living in urban areas is expected to reach 60%, and by 2050, cities are projected to house 68% of the world's population, effectively reversing the rural–urban distribution seen in the mid-20th century.

Though all world regions are expected to become more urbanised in the coming

decades, the pace will differ widely. Latin America and the Caribbean, along with Northern America, are already highly urban, with over 80% of their populations living in cities in 2018; this figure is expected to approach 90% by 2050. Europe, where nearly 75% of people lived in urban areas in 2018, is projected to reach 80% urbanisation by 2040 and nearly 85% by 2050. In comparison, Oceania is expected to maintain a relatively stable level of urbanisation, increasing only slightly—from around 70% today to just above 70% by 2050.

Urbanisation is largely driven by the swift migration of people into towns and cities, motivated by the belief that rural areas offer limited opportunities, greater hardship, or a more traditional and less developed way of life. As a result, urbanisation occurs when large numbers of individuals relocate to more advanced and better-developed urban centres. The major causes of urbanisation can be grouped into the following categories:

2.2.3. Causes and Consequences of Urbanisation

1. **Industrialisation:** As societies shift from agricultural work to non-agricultural and modern occupations, they become more industrialised. The industrial revolution encouraged a large number of people to move from rural areas to cities in search of improved economic opportunities. Urban centres offered diverse jobs in various industrial sectors, contributing to overall economic development.

2. **Commercialisation:** Trade in all its forms plays a significant role in the expansion of cities. The rise of modern marketing systems and advanced methods of exchanging goods, services, and commercial activities has accelerated the growth of towns and cities. Many people believe that business and trade activities in urban areas offer greater opportunities and better financial returns than those available in rural regions.

3. **Social Benefits:** City life offers a wide range of social advantages. Urban residents usually have better access to housing, medical care, entertainment, and educational facilities, allowing them to enjoy a richer and more satisfying social life. Because many of these services are limited or absent in rural areas, an increasing number of people are drawn to towns and cities.

4. **Employment Opportunities:** Urban areas provide a large variety of jobs, attracting people from villages who seek improved living standards. Many migrate to cities to find well-paid work in growing fields such as public health, education, transport, sports, recreation, and business services. These sectors continually create higher value-added jobs, expanding overall employment opportunities in metropolitan regions.

5. **Modernisation and Changing Lifestyles:** Modernisation and rapidly changing lifestyles strongly contribute to urbanisation. Cities now offer advanced communication networks, modern infrastructure, improved healthcare, diverse clothing trends, greater awareness, liberal attitudes, and better social amenities. Many believe that urban living promises a happier and more rewarding life. As people move in daily, urban populations rise, leading to rapid city expansion.

6. **Rural-Urban Transformation:** Certain rural areas become more productive and prosperous due to mineral discoveries, resource extraction, or specialised agricultural activities. As productivity increases, economic growth follows, creating more high-value employment.

This often encourages the development of commercial spaces, social institutions, transport networks, and housing, gradually turning rural regions into emerging urban centres.

2.2.4. Consequences of Urbanisation

Urbanisation brings a mix of advantages and challenges. Let us look at both sides.

Positive Impacts

a. **Higher Standard of Living:** As cities grow, they create more job opportunities and offer better infrastructure, technology, transport, communication, and improved healthcare and education. All these factors contribute to a better quality of life for urban residents.

b. **Expanded Market Opportunities:** Urban dwellers have access to a much wider range of goods and services than those in rural areas. Most cities feature shopping malls, a variety of stores, and numerous entertainment, dining, and cultural options that stay open longer to attract customers. However, since many businesses are owned by large national or global chains, small independent shops often struggle to survive.

c. **Better Services:** Large cities are able to provide a broader range of public services compared to rural regions. These may include organised public transport, reliable water and sewage systems, multiple recreational and educational facilities, and larger, better-equipped healthcare centres.

Negative Consequences

a. **Housing Problems:** Rapid population growth caused by increasing urban migration has led to severe pressure on housing in cities. Limited space, poverty, unemployment, the rise of slums, and the high cost of building materials restrict the availability of affordable housing. As a result, many residents struggle to find suitable living spaces in urban areas.

b. **Overcrowding:** Large cities often have too many people living within a small area, leading to constant congestion. As more migrants move to urban centres in search of better opportunities, the problem of overcrowding continues to worsen. People leaving rural or less developed regions for city life add to the pressure on limited urban space.

c. **Unemployment:** Urban areas frequently experience high unemployment rates, especially among educated youth. Estimates suggest that more than half of the world's unemployed young people live in cities. Much of this joblessness is linked to the steady flow of people migrating from rural areas. Although cities generally offer higher wages, the high cost of living means incomes do not go very far.

d. **Expansion of Slums:** Living expenses in cities are extremely high. Because urban areas cannot keep up with the rapid and unexpected population increase, large slum settlements and shanty towns develop. These areas often consist of informal, unplanned housing and face numerous social and infrastructural challenges.

e. **Sanitation Problems:** The sharp rise in urban populations has made it common to find inadequate sewage systems in many cities. Local authorities struggle to manage waste effectively due to limited resources. This leads to poor sanitation, with untreated sewage flowing into nearby water bodies. Consequently, diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, diarrhoea, and

plague spread easily. Overcrowding also worsens water scarcity, as supply cannot meet growing demand.

f. **Health Concerns:** Health conditions among low-income urban residents are often worse than those of middle- and upper-income groups—and sometimes even poorer than those in rural areas. Overcrowding, poor living conditions, and limited access to health services contribute to this imbalance. Slum dwellers are particularly vulnerable to infections due to inadequate hygiene and water shortages. Environmental problems, especially severe air pollution in cities, also lead to a range of health issues such as asthma, allergies, infertility, food poisoning, cancer, and premature deaths.

g. **Traffic Congestion:** As more people move to towns and cities, urban transportation systems face serious challenges. Suburban expansion increases dependence on vehicles for commuting, leading to traffic jams and air pollution from fossil fuel combustion. The growing number of vehicles intensifies congestion, particularly during rush hours. Additionally, as cities expand, people frequently travel to markets for daily needs, which further adds to traffic problems.

h. **Garbage Disposal:** Rapid population growth and city expansion in India have made waste management a major concern. Large urban areas generate vast amounts of rubbish, posing significant health risks. Many cities lack proper waste disposal systems, and existing landfills are often overflowing. Toxic leachate from decomposing waste contaminates groundwater, while open garbage attracts rats and insects that spread diseases. Residents near waste dumps and untreated sewage are especially vulnerable to illnesses such as typhoid, jaundice, diarrhoea, dysentery, malaria, and plague.

i. **Rising Crime:** High population density, poverty, unemployment, and inadequate social services and education in urban areas contribute to various societal problems. Cities face increased vandalism, crime, violence, and drug abuse. Crimes such as murder, rape, abduction, assault, theft, robbery, and hijacking are more prevalent in metropolitan areas, with poverty-related crimes particularly common in rapidly growing cities. Urban safety is further complicated by corruption, as some officials, politicians, and influential groups protect criminals, allowing certain offenders to rise to powerful political positions through money and influence.

Recap

- Southern India is more urbanised compared to the northern and eastern regions, largely due to its rich historical, sociocultural, and educational resources.
- During British rule, the administration played a pivotal role in shaping India's urban landscape, establishing the three major port cities of Chennai, Kolkata, and Mumbai.
- The climate and geography played a crucial role in the development of these cities, which is why many were located along coasts or near major rivers.
- During the colonial period, modern cities began to emerge in India, characterised by large populations and diverse social compositions.

- Towns and cities typically developed in response to specific needs and circumstances, with key prerequisites including access to water, defensible locations, food availability, and, later, effective communication networks.
- Currently, India has around 4,400 statutory towns and cities with a population exceeding 400 million.
- China and India followed similar urbanisation trends until the late 1980s, with roughly one in four people living in urban areas in both countries.
- Urbanisation is largely driven by the swift migration of people into towns and cities, motivated by the belief that rural areas offer limited opportunities, greater hardship, or a more traditional and less developed way of life.

Objective Questions

1. In India, which sector has contributed most to the growth of towns?
2. Which region of India is more urbanised due to strong historical, sociocultural, and educational resources?
3. Lord Ripon is known as the founder of which major administrative development in India?
4. Ancient cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro belong to which early civilisation?
5. According to projections, what percentage of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2050?
6. What is included in the social benefits of urban life?
7. Name any negative consequences of urbanisation.
8. What is the major consequence of rapid urban migration?
9. What are the main causes of urban health problems?
10. What are the major causes of traffic congestion in cities?

Answers

1. Tertiary sector
2. Southern India
3. Local self-government
4. Indus Valley Civilisation
5. 68%
6. Access to housing, healthcare, education, and entertainment
7. Overcrowding and housing problems
8. Formation of slums and unplanned housing
9. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, air pollution, and limited health services
10. Suburban expansion and increasing reliance on vehicles for commuting

Assignments

1. Explain the major factors contributing to urbanisation in India. How do economic, administrative, social, and technological elements shape urban growth?
2. Compare the characteristics of ancient, medieval, and modern Indian cities. Discuss how their functions, populations, and governance systems evolved over time.
3. Describe the trends of global and Indian urbanisation from 1900 to the present. What demographic changes have occurred, and what challenges and opportunities do these trends create for the future?
4. Explain the major causes of urbanisation, discussing the roles of industrialisation, commercialisation, social benefits, employment opportunities, and modernisation.
5. Analyse the positive and negative consequences of urbanisation, including impacts on living standards, employment, housing, sanitation, and health.
6. Evaluate the social and environmental challenges faced by rapidly growing urban areas, focusing on traffic congestion, waste management, slums, and crime. Suggest practical solutions for these issues.

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BLOCK

Theoretical Perspectives in Urban Sociology

UNIT 1

Classical Theorists: Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Simmel

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand major theoretical perspectives on urban social life
- explain Durkheim's theory of division of labor and Marx's capitalist model of production to analyse urbanization process
- assess urban social structure and life using Weber's theory of rationality and Simmel's theory

Prerequisite

Urban social life is a complex and dynamic field of study that examines how individuals and groups interact within urban environments. Understanding urban social life requires a foundational knowledge of key sociological perspectives, including structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. These perspectives help explain how cities evolve, how social structures shape urban experiences, and how individuals navigate urban spaces. Additionally, students should be familiar with fundamental sociological concepts such as social stratification, social networks, migration, and urbanisation. An awareness of historical and contemporary urban issues, including globalisation, economic inequality, and spatial segregation, will further enhance their understanding of urban social dynamics.

To engage with theoretical perspectives on urban social life, learners should also develop analytical and critical thinking skills. This includes the ability to assess empirical research, interpret qualitative and quantitative data, and apply theoretical frameworks to real-world urban settings. Familiarity with key urban classical theorists such as Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx, as well as contemporary thinkers like David Harvey and Manuel Castells, will provide valuable insights into the complexities of city life. By exploring these perspectives,

students will gain a deeper understanding of how urban environments influence social interactions, cultural expressions, and power dynamics, ultimately preparing them to analyse contemporary urban challenges.

Keywords

Urbanisation, Social cohesion, Metropolis, Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft

Discussion

Urban sociology is a branch of sociology that examines human life and interactions within cities. It seeks to understand the structures, processes, transformations, and challenges of urban areas while also contributing to urban planning and policy development. This field emerged as a distinct area of study in the early 20th century. Although cities existed long before, the social shifts brought about by the Industrial Revolution and urban expansion led scholars to focus on urban life. Following the Industrial Revolution, sociologists like Max Weber and Georg Simmel explored the rapid growth of cities and its impact on social isolation and anonymity.

Urban sociology is a subfield of sociology that examines how the urban environment influences individuals, their actions, relationships, institutions, and ways of thinking, acting, and interacting with others. It focuses on the social and physical aspects of city life, analysing how socio-cultural and environmental conditions shape human behaviour. Urban sociology also explores the consequences of urbanisation, considering the impact of social, economic, and technological forces on individuals, families, and broader society. These factors play a significant role in reshaping an urban person's roles and statuses, leading to profound transformations that ultimately affect their overall quality of life.

The growing interest in urban life among sociologists can be traced back to the industrial and urban revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe and England. These revolutions brought rapid social changes, prompting scholars to study their effects on human society. Thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Ferdinand Tönnies, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, and Max Weber contributed significantly to urban sociology, responding to the societal transformations triggered by industrialisation and urban expansion. Their work laid the foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of modern urban life.

3.1.1. Urban Social Life

Urban sociology is an engaging and practical discipline that examines various aspects of city life, including the organisation and disorganisation of urban communities, cultural transformations, economic growth, and political and social changes. The urban setting is fundamentally different from rural life, with significant shifts in family structures, marriage traditions, and caste significance. As men and women gain greater social and economic independence, divorce rates tend to rise. Urban areas also offer diverse job opportunities, attracting large numbers of rural migrants. While rural poverty pushes people towards cities, the economic opportunities and perceived wealth

of urban life pull them in. This influx of people leads to high population density, increased demand for space, and the rapid expansion of slums.

Modern cities face numerous challenges, including overcrowding, traffic congestion, slum development, strikes, alienation, and rising crime rates. The growth and evolution of urban centres depend on the standard of living and the integration of science and technology into daily life. However, this progress often comes at the cost of lost traditions, morality, simplicity, and humility. Over time, villages expand into towns, which grow into district centres, eventually developing into metropolitan, mega, and cosmopolitan cities. In just a decade or two, many urban centres worldwide have experienced rapid, unregulated growth. This expansion brings issues such as land encroachment, rising crime, declining law and order, and shifting moral values. To truly understand a city's growth, it must be analysed not just in terms of geography but also in relation to its ethical, social, and aesthetic dimensions.

Urban sociology integrates knowledge from history and various social sciences, including economics, social psychology, political science, anthropology, government, public administration, business management, demography, social work, and law. It addresses a wide range of urban issues, such as public housing, zoning regulations, building codes, slums, sanitation, sewage systems, waste management, water supply, traffic control, school administration, and city infrastructure, including seaports, airports, courts, and fire stations. The study of urban life requires sociologists to gather data from diverse fields, including criminology, medicine, hygiene, architecture, urban planning, engineering, business, and education.

To develop meaningful conclusions, urban sociologists must collect and analyse data using a systematic, scientific approach. Information from architects, town planners, engineers, auto dealers, ministers, educators, and business professionals must be examined objectively. By adhering to scientific principles and maintaining objectivity, urban sociology ensures that its findings and interpretations provide valuable insights into urban development, governance, and social challenges.

3.1.2. Classical Sociological Traditions of Urban Sociology

The foundational theories of urban sociology stem from the works of thinkers like Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, and others. Simmel argued that the monetised economy of cities weakened social bonds. Weber examined how large-scale urbanisation diminished opportunities for political engagement. Marx and Engels criticised the effects of urbanisation under capitalism, viewing the concentration of workers in urban centres as a necessary step toward revolutionary change. They saw urbanisation not only as a process of economic hardship and material decline, but also as the breakdown of traditional social ties, replaced by the utilitarian nature of city life. For them, both in theory and practice, communism was intrinsically linked to urbanism.

3.1.2.1 Émile Durkheim: Division of Labour

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), a foundational figure in sociology, had a positive outlook on cities and urban life. He acknowledged the strong social bonds in small rural communities the bond between all individuals within a society. Social bonds are constructed on likeness and largely depend on common beliefs, customs, rituals, routines, and symbols; people are identical in major ways and thus united almost automatically,

self-sufficient. Social cohesion is based on the likeness and similarities among individuals in a society, which is common among prehistoric and pre-agricultural societies and lessens in predominance as modernity increases, a concept he referred to as *Mechanical Solidarity*. However, he also believed that such societies could restrict individual freedom. In contrast, he argued that urban societies maintain social ties through a different mechanism, which he called *Organic Solidarity*. This social order is based on social differences and a complex division of labour, where many different people specialise in various occupations. Urban life offers greater freedom and choice for inhabitants, despite acknowledged impersonality, alienation, disagreement, and conflict. While this undermines traditional social integration, it creates a new form of social cohesion based on mutual interdependence, liberating individuals in a more advanced society. Common among industrial societies as the division of labor increases. Though individuals perform different tasks and often have different values and interests, the order and very survival of society depends on their reliance on each other to perform their specific task.This form of cohesion emerges from the division of labour, where individuals become interdependent by relying on each other to perform specialised roles.

Durkheim explored urbanisation in his work on the division of labour, analysing the characteristics of urban societies. He argued that cities create a new type of social integration based on mutual dependence rather than traditional communal bonds. This interdependence, according to Durkheim, is a key feature of organic solidarity and cooperative societies. He remained optimistic about the future of cities, seeing them as spaces that foster collaboration and social cohesion through the complexities of modern economic and social structures.

Durkheim argued that as population density and overall population size grow, competition among individuals increases. This competition drives people to specialise in particular skills and to trade the goods and services produced through their specialised activities. As a result, distinct occupations emerge, leading to a more developed division of labour. According to Durkheim, urbanisation, along with population growth, plays a key role in shaping this process. He emphasised population change as a major factor influencing social and economic structures.

Additionally, Durkheim viewed cities as hubs of creativity and innovation, fostering a greater acceptance of diverse ideas. He believed that urban residents tend to be more tolerant than those in rural areas because they are frequently exposed to a wide range of non-traditional attitudes, behaviours, and lifestyles. This exposure, he argued, makes city dwellers more open-minded and adaptable to new ways of thinking, contributing to the dynamism of urban life.

Durkheim viewed the increasing specialisation and interdependence in society as a sign of social progress. However, he also recognised that the division of labour brought certain challenges, such as unregulated competition, class conflict, and the sense of meaninglessness associated with repetitive industrial work. Despite these issues, he believed they were temporary side effects of the rapid pace of industrialisation. Over time, he argued, economic regulations and social norms governing industrial relations would develop to address these problems, ensuring stability and cohesion in society.

Furthermore, Durkheim attributed the rise of *anomie* a state of normlessness to the swift and incomplete transition from traditional moral values to a society based on organic solidarity. He saw cities as an essential phase in human civilisation, where social structures evolve and adapt. According

to him, deviance played a crucial role in this process, serving as a mechanism for testing and modifying societal norms. In this way, social change emerged as a necessary and inevitable part of urban life.

3.1.2.2. Karl Marx: The Capitalist Mode of Production

Marx was highly critical of the process of urbanisation, particularly under capitalism. Along with his colleague Frederick Engels, he condemned urbanisation as a phenomenon driven by the political economy of capitalism. Political economy refers to the interplay of political and economic forces in a society. They viewed the rise of cities as a transition from barbarism to civilisation, where people could achieve political and economic freedom, as well as productivity and specialisation. However, they argued that true social evolution could not be completed through urbanisation alone; it required the transformation of capitalism into socialism. They believed that capitalism, as a dominant system of power, influences the development of modern urban-industrial communities. Marx focused on economic structures, highlighting issues of inequality and conflict that emerged in urban areas as a result of capitalist expansion.

They believed that urbanisation had harmful consequences for society, particularly in terms of economic hardship and social degradation. For them, pauperisation and material decline were inherent aspects of urbanisation under capitalism. However, they were especially critical of its deeper social impact the erosion of traditional community ties. Marx and Engels argued that urbanisation replaced the close-knit bonds of traditional societies with a utilitarian, individualistic urban environment, which they saw as one of the most damaging effects of capitalist development.

3.1.2.3. Max Weber: The City and the Growth of Rationality

German sociologist Max Weber, in his book *The City*, defined urban sociology as a structured system composed of intricate social actions, relationships, and institutions. According to him, cities possess key characteristics, including a marketplace, fortifications, a complex legal framework with courts, and an elected administrative body. Weber examined both the social organisation of cities and their ecological and demographic traits. He viewed the city as a densely populated and relatively self-contained settlement, where social and economic interactions shape its unique structure.

Unlike many scholars who concentrated solely on European cities, Max Weber conducted a broad survey of urban centres worldwide. Weber defined the urban community as an *ideal type*, characterised by several key elements: (1) the presence of trade and commercial activities, such as a marketplace, (2) an independent legal system with its own courts, (3) a degree of political autonomy, (4) military self-sufficiency for defence, and (5) various forms of social participation, enabling individuals to engage in relationships and organisations within the city.

Weber categorised cities into three distinct types based on their economic foundations:

- **Consumer City**: This type thrives on the spending of wealthy individuals who derive their income from political positions or landownership outside the city.
- **Producer City**: Its economy is driven by entrepreneurs, artisans, and merchants who sustain themselves through industrial production, including factories and workshops.

- **Merchant City**: The economic strength of this city comes from traders whose revenue is generated by selling goods locally or in foreign markets.

Weber also viewed the city as a politico-administrative entity that required autonomy in its organisation. He referred to it as a community with distinct political and administrative institutions. While a city might generate much of its revenue from agriculture, it still functioned as an administrative hub for the surrounding region. In his analysis, medieval cities represented the legal and institutional expression of organised power by specific social groups. Cities became spaces where individuals could gain influence, serving as arenas for class struggles and status conflicts that led to the formation of new institutions. In medieval towns, individuality emerged through craft and commercial guilds, which demanded loyalty from their members in exchange for rights of citizenship. These communes, or conjurations, as Weber called them, played a crucial role in establishing and enforcing laws, maintaining commercial monopolies, securing markets free from feudal restrictions, and even building armies for defence and territorial expansion.

Weber argued that cities were deeply connected to broader economic and political developments. He rejected urban structures governed by religious groups or those where authority was based on personal rule rather than universal legal principles. According to him, the growth of rational-legal institutions in modern cities allowed individuals to break away from traditional group constraints and develop their own identities. He emphasised the autonomy, distinctiveness, and self-contained nature of urban communities, highlighting how medieval cities were shaped by their position within the larger medieval political and social framework. Over time, new forms of social organisation emerged, prioritising efficiency and bureaucracy, which became defining features of modern urban life.

3.1.2.4. Georg Simmel: The Metropolis and the Mental Life

Georg Simmel (1858-1918) emphasised the significance of urban experience, focusing on urbanism rather than the broader process of urbanisation. In his essay The Metropolis and Mental Life, he examined how city life influences thought and behaviour, placing particular emphasis on social psychology. He argued that three key factors size, differentiation, and rationality have the most immediate and intense impact on social relationships. These elements form the foundation of his analysis of urban existence.

According to Simmel, the size of a metropolis plays a crucial role in shaping social interactions. While larger cities provide greater individual freedom, they also weaken the depth and intimacy of personal relationships. Differentiation is another defining characteristic of urban life, as cities serve as hubs of economic specialisation and division of labour. This high level of differentiation is closely tied to population size, as only large communities can sustain a wide range of services. Additionally, Simmel highlighted rationality as a core feature of metropolitan life, arguing that cities are deeply connected to the money economy. In his view, urban environments prioritise logic and calculation over emotion and personal connections, fostering a culture of intellectualism rather than affective relationships. Specifically, Simmel acknowledged freedom, the transcendence of the pettiness of daily routine, and new heights of personal and spiritual development in urban life.

Simmel argues that urban life brings about irreversible changes in an individual's mindset. He claimed that the unique trait

of the modern city is the intensification of nervous stimuli with which the city dweller must cope, contrasting it with the rural setting, where the rhythm of life and sensory imagery is slower, more habitual, and even. In the city, individuals experience constant bombardments of sights, sounds, and smells. While he does not necessarily view these changes as negative, he emphasises that cities exert strong structural influences on socialisation. Unlike other scholars who focused on urbanisation as a process, Simmel concentrated on urbanism the ways in which city life shapes social interactions. He was somewhat pessimistic about urban expansion, noting that individuals in urban environments develop a blasé attitude a sense of social detachment and emotional reserve. This attitude, characterised by a rational rather than emotional response to stimuli, arises from sensory overload and is further reinforced by the money economy.

In his work Philosophy of Money, Simmel explains how money fosters rational calculation in human affairs, contributing to the broader rationalisation process in modern societies. Money, he argues, replaces personal, emotional relationships with impersonal, purpose-driven interactions. Beyond its economic role, money symbolises the modern spirit of rationalism, calculability, and impersonality, reducing all values to a single common denominator. While metropolitan life promotes individual freedom, it also intensifies individualism and subjectivism, leading to a more detached and fragmented social existence.

Philosophy of Money

Simmel argues that money plays a crucial role in advancing rational calculation in human affairs, contributing to the broader rationalisation of modern societies. He explains that money replaces personal, emotionally driven relationships with impersonal interactions that serve specific, utilitarian purposes. He considered economic exchange to be a form of social interaction. Beyond its economic function, money embodies the modern spirit of rationalism, calculability, and impersonality; it is subject to precise division and manipulation, permitting exact measurement of equivalents. Money promotes rational calculation in human affairs. However, Simmel also highlights its negative effects on social relationships, particularly in how monetary exchange influences human interactions. He points to prostitution as an example, where financial transactions become the central element of social interaction, stripping relationships of emotional depth and reducing them to economic exchanges.

Simmel also explores the deeper struggles of modern life, emphasising the tension between individuality and overwhelming social forces. He argues that individuals in contemporary society struggle to maintain their autonomy and uniqueness amid historical traditions, external cultural pressures, and the rigid structures of modern life. He describes the urban cosmopolitan as detached and unpredictable, shaped by the impersonal nature of city life. Furthermore, he suggests that modern individuals are trapped in an "iron cage" of bureaucratic work and economic obligations, while also facing the existential dilemma of searching for identity in a consumer-driven, soulless mass society.

Recap

- Urban sociology is a branch of sociology that examines human life and interactions within cities.
- The growth and evolution of urban centres depend on the standard of living and the integration of science and technology into daily life.
- The study of urban life requires sociologists to gather data from diverse fields such as criminology, medicine, hygiene, architecture, urban planning, engineering, business, and education.
- Weber examined how large-scale urbanisation diminished opportunities for political engagement.
- Durkheim explored urbanisation in his work on the division of labour, where he analysed the characteristics of urban societies.
- According to Durkheim, urbanisation, along with population growth, plays a key role in shaping this process.
- Durkheim viewed the increasing specialisation and interdependence in society as a sign of social progress.
- Marx focused on economic structures, highlighting issues of inequality and conflict that emerged in urban areas as a result of capitalist expansion.
- Weber categorised cities into three distinct types based on their economic foundations.
- Communes, or *conjurations*, as Weber called them, played a crucial role in establishing and enforcing laws, maintaining commercial monopolies, and securing markets free from feudal restrictions.
- According to Simmel, the size of a metropolis plays a crucial role in shaping social interactions.
- Simmel argues that money plays a crucial role in advancing rational calculation in human affairs, contributing to the broader rationalisation of modern societies.

Objective Questions

1. Who authored *The Division of Labour* in Society?
2. What is *Anomie*?
3. Who authored the work *The City*?
4. Who are conjurations?
5. Who wrote *The Metropolis and Mental Life*?
6. Who authored the work *Philosophy of Money*?
7. Name the strong social bonds found in small rural communities.

Answers

1. Emile Durkheim
2. A state of normlessness
3. Max Weber
4. Communes (Commercial guilds)
5. Georg Simmel
6. Georg Simmel
7. Mechanical solidarity

Assignments

1. Describe Durkheim's view on urban social life. Do you think that increased urbanisation leads to interdependence? Justify your answer.
2. Urban centres are the epitome of organic solidarity. Substantiate this claim.
3. Examine the various types of cities as discussed by Weber.
4. What elements characterise urban communities?
5. Explain Simmel's views on urban social life and discuss the importance of money.

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UNIT 2

Ferdinand Tonnies and Robert Redfield

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand classical theoretical traditions in urban sociology
- examine urban processes using Tönnies's theory of the dichotomy model
- explain Redfield's concept of the rural-urban continuum in relation to rural social life

Prerequisite

Urban sociology developed as a response to the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that characterised the 19th and early 20th centuries. These changes transformed traditional social structures, giving rise to complex urban environments where people experienced new forms of social interaction, alienation, and cultural differentiation. The city became a central site for sociological analysis, prompting thinkers to explore how urban life reshaped individual consciousness, community bonds, and social organisation. Simmel, as part of the classical sociological tradition in Europe, and Redfield, as a cultural anthropologist and sociologist in the American tradition, approached these transformations from distinct but complementary angles.

Examine the foundational concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, as developed by Ferdinand Tönnies, which significantly influenced early urban theory. These terms describe a shift from close-knit, traditional, community-oriented societies (Gemeinschaft) to impersonal, individualistic, and functionally driven urban societies (Gesellschaft). Simmel's focus on the psychological and sensory experiences of city life, and Redfield's study of rural and urban cultural patterns through the folk-urban continuum, both build upon and respond to these

early ideas. While Simmel analysed how urban environments affect individual autonomy and social relationships, Redfield concentrated on how cultural traits evolve as societies transition from rural to urban settings. Thus, understanding these broader historical and conceptual developments is crucial for fully appreciating their contributions to urban sociology.

Keywords

Folk-urban continuum, Great and little traditions, Locality, City life, Folk society

Discussion

The classical dichotomous or typological perspective played a crucial role in shaping urban sociology. It proposed an idealised model of the city by drawing a sharp contrast between urban and rural or folk societies. This framework aimed to understand the unique nature of urban social life by comparing it with the distinct features of rural communities. Scholars such as Ferdinand Tönnies, Henry Maine, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, and Robert Redfield were pioneers of this approach, using these comparisons to define and analyse urban structures.

Ferdinand Tönnies, in particular, made a significant contribution by introducing the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in 1887. He used these terms to describe the transition from traditional, close-knit communities (Gemeinschaft) to more modern, impersonal societies (Gesellschaft). According to Tönnies, this transformation reflected broader social changes where human relationships shifted from personal bonds to formal associations. He attributed this shift primarily to the expansion of trade and the rise of capitalism, which redefined how people interacted and organised their social lives.

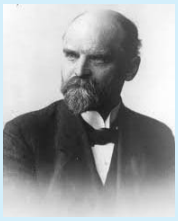
Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), a foundational figure in classical sociology, offered one of the earliest conceptual frameworks to understand the transformation of social life under urbanisation. His most influential work, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887), introduces a dual typology of social relationships that underpins urban sociology: Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (society).

3.2.1. Ferdinand Tönnies's Theory of Urbanisation

Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) considered the social structure of the city and used the German terms Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to highlight the contrast between life in close-knit rural communities and the more impersonal, organised life of urban society. His work stands out for its emotional tone, expressing a sense of loss and nostalgia for traditional rural life, unlike the more analytical approaches of thinkers like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx. Tönnies viewed rural society as being rooted in emotional bonds and communal values, which he believed were being eroded by the rise of urban modernity.

At the core of Tönnies' theory is the distinction between two types of human will: natural will and rational will. Natural will is based on instincts, emotions, and

inherited traits essentially, the bonds formed through feelings and shared traditions. This type of will underlies Gemeinschaft, where relationships are personal and emotionally driven. In contrast, rational will involves calculated, goal-oriented thinking that reflects intellectual reasoning. This kind of will forms the basis of Gesellschaft, where social ties are more formal, detached, and structured by practical concerns. In simple terms, Gemeinschaft reflects the heart, while Gesellschaft reflects the head.



Ferdinand Tönnies, recognized as the founder of German sociology as an academic field, is best known for introducing the influential sociological dichotomy Gemeinschaft–Gesellschaft. In his study of society, he sought to reconcile the organic and social-contract perspectives, identifying three main branches of general sociology: social biology, social psychology, and special sociology. Here, "special sociology" referred to what is now generally called "general sociology," comprising three interrelated components pure sociology, applied sociology, and empirical sociology (or sociography). His notable works include *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887), *Thomas Hobbes: Leben und Lehre* (1896), *Marx: Leben und Lehre* (1921), *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (1922), *Einführung in die Soziologie* (1931), and *Geist der Neuzeit* (1935). Tönnies' intricate analyses, often combining competing theories into a unified framework, along with his somewhat old-fashioned writing style, limited his scholarly recognition during his lifetime. However, recent English translations, analyses, and the publication of his collected works in German have sparked renewed interest in his sociological contributions.

3.2.1.1. Concept of Gemeinschaft (Community)

Ferdinand Tönnies used the term Gemeinschaft to describe forms of social life characterised by close, personal, and exclusive relationships within a single, unified community. It represented a strong sense of social cohesion where individuals were deeply connected and integrated into the group. In such a setting, a person was not seen as a separate, independent unit but rather as part of a collective social body an inseparable segment of the whole community. The community characterised a country village, where people in rural areas share an essential unity of purpose, work together for the common good, and are united by ties of family (kinship) and neighbourhood. The land is worked communally by inhabitants, and social life is characterised by intimate, private, and exclusive living together, with members bound by a common language and traditions.

Although the English word "community" is often used to translate Gemeinschaft, it fails to fully capture the depth and emotional richness of the original term. In Gemeinschaft, relationships such as those within a family are lifelong and marked by shared joys and sorrows. From birth, individuals are bound to their community through a sense of mutual fate and loyalty, emphasising a profound emotional and social bond that goes far beyond what the word "community" typically implies in English.

3.2.1.2. Concept of Gesellschaft (Society)

The term Gesellschaft, often translated as "society," refers to the broader, impersonal realm of public life, where social bonds are formal, distant, and based on individual

interests rather than emotional connections. Unlike the warmth and intimacy of Gemeinschaft, Gesellschaft represents a world of detached relationships, where people interact as strangers. Tönnies illustrates this by suggesting that entering Gesellschaft is like entering an unfamiliar land. While one can speak of "bad Gesellschaft," the phrase "bad Gemeinschaft" would contradict the very spirit of the concept. Gemeinschaft is rooted in traditional, rural life and valued for its emotional richness, whereas Gesellschaft is seen as modern, temporary, and superficial akin to a mechanical construction rather than a living, organic whole. Gesellschaft is characterised by large cities, where city life is a mechanical aggregate marked by disunity, rampant individualism, and selfishness. The meaning of existence shifts from the group to the individual, becoming rational and calculating, with each person understood in terms of a particular role and service provided. It deals with the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings that superficially resembles Gemeinschaft in so far as the individuals peacefully live together; yet, whereas in Gemeinschaft people are united in spite of all separating factors, in Gesellschaft people are separated in spite of all uniting factors.

The contrast between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft goes beyond physical settlements like villages or cities; it highlights the fundamental differences in how human relationships are structured. Gemeinschaft emphasises collective identity, emotional closeness, and moral unity, while Gesellschaft centres on individualism, rational calculation, and contractual ties. This dichotomy reflects the transformation of society from traditional to modern forms of social organisation. Talcott Parsons later refined this framework, interpreting Gemeinschaft as driven by values such as particularism, emotional attachment, and role flexibility, while Gesellschaft is shaped by universal rules, performance-based roles, emotional neutrality, and specific, goal-oriented interactions. Rather than a strict rural-urban divide, these concepts map the broader trajectory of social evolution.

Ferdinand Tönnies identified a fundamental conflict between Gemeinschaft and urban life. He viewed the rural village as a natural setting for unity, stability, and long-standing personal relationships, where people were deeply rooted in communal ties. In contrast, the city disrupted this sense of harmony. Urban life brought with it social divisions particularly between classes and fostered antagonism between the interests of capital and labour. It lacked a natural space for familial and communal bonds, instead favouring impersonal, competitive, and fragmented social arrangements.

According to Tönnies, the city epitomises Gesellschaft a society driven by commerce, industry, and rational calculation. Urban centres are dominated by economic activities, with wealth concentrated in capital and used for trade, profit-making, or worker exploitation. Even culture, science, and the arts are subjected to market forces, becoming tools for economic gain. In such a setting, social interaction is not guided by emotional ties but by calculated exchange and utility. Though cities may seem to unite people in one place, Tönnies argued that individuals in urban society are ultimately isolated, coexisting in a state of constant tension and self-interest.

Ferdinand Tönnies believed that the shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft brought about a fundamental change in the individual's relationship with the state. His ideas were heavily influenced by Henry Maine's work Ancient Law, which outlined the evolution of legal systems from being based on status to being governed by contract. In traditional societies, laws applied primarily to the head of the household, who represented the entire family. Social behaviour was regulated by customs and a deep sense of

family honour. Tönnies saw this older legal structure as reflective of the communal and collective spirit of Gemeinschaft, where individuals were bound by inherited roles and responsibilities within a tightly knit group.

While Maine did not explicitly link this legal transformation to urbanisation, Tönnies made that connection by aligning status with Gemeinschaft and contract with Gesellschaft. In a Gemeinschaft, individuals are socially regulated through their emotional and moral ties to the group. In contrast, in a Gesellschaft, where those traditional bonds are weakened or absent, control must come from external systems namely formal laws, contracts, and penalties that enforce predictable behaviour. Tönnies highlighted the fragile and artificial nature of urban society, where relationships are increasingly driven by self-interest rather than mutual obligation. Drawing from Maine, he saw the legal contract as a necessary but impersonal mechanism to manage the social tensions that arise in this modern, individualistic world.

Ferdinand Tönnies argued that the historical shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft was driven largely by the expansion of trade and the rise of industrial capitalism. He even referred to Gesellschaft as "bourgeois society," emphasising its foundation in economic self-interest rather than emotional or communal ties. In Gemeinschaft, people are united by natural bonds such as kinship, local community, and shared religious beliefs. However, the rise of capitalism disrupted this organic unity, replacing it with relationships based on monetary value, contracts, and the pursuit of individual gain. In this new order, the only force capable of holding society together is the state but unlike the moral and personal authority of village elders or religious figures in Gemeinschaft, the modern state operates through impersonal, legal mechanisms that serve the interests of property owners and feel distant and alien to ordinary citizens.

Tönnies's theory outlines a basic evolutionary model of social change, much like that of Karl Marx. While Tönnies acknowledged that society could not return to the traditional forms of Gemeinschaft, he still held out hope for a better version of Gesellschaft. He envisioned a future where the isolating and competitive nature of capitalist society could be softened through more cooperative structures, such as worker co-operatives. These could help foster a new kind of solidarity one that, while modern and rational, might overcome some of the alienation and fragmentation associated with the individualistic capitalism of his time.

3.2.2. Robert Redfield (1897-1958): Folk-Urban Continuum

Concept of Folk Society

In 1927–28, Robert Redfield conducted fieldwork in the traditional village of Tepoztlán, which later became the subject of his 1930 publication. He viewed this village as an ideal type of folk society, standing in sharp contrast to urban society. However, Redfield emphasised that such ideal types do not exist in reality they are merely theoretical constructs used for analytical purposes. Based on his observations in Tepoztlán, Redfield outlined several defining characteristics of folk societies that distinguish them from urban communities.

Firstly, folk societies are generally isolated. Although they occupy specific territories, they remain physically and socially cut off from outside influences and exhibit minimal mobility. These societies are small in size, meaning their population is limited, and members maintain direct, face-to-face contact with one another. A strong sense of community identity exists, expressed through the 'we' versus 'they' mentality insiders are clearly distinguished from outsiders, strengthening group solidarity.

Relationships in such societies are deeply personal. People are not only familiar with each other's names but also recognise each other by appearance, fostering tight social bonds. Members share common interests, especially regarding livelihood. Food is produced and consumed collectively, emphasising cooperation rather than competition. The division of labour is basic and largely follows gender lines rather than specialisation.

Robert Redfield (1897–1958), a leading U.S. cultural anthropologist, was instrumental in exploring the cultural and social changes shaping the relationship between folk and urban societies. Initially trained in law, a 1923 trip to Mexico shifted his interests to anthropology, leading him to return for fieldwork in 1926. After earning his Ph.D. in 1928 from the University of Chicago, he published Tepoztlán, a Mexican Village (1930), which earned significant recognition. His long association with the Carnegie Institution involved extensive research in the Yucatán and Guatemala, producing notable works such as *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* (1934) with Alfonso Villa Rojas and *The Folk Culture of the Yucatán* (1941), where he developed the folk–urban continuum model, showing how small, isolated communities transform into large, diverse societies through cultural and social change.

In later years, Redfield broadened his research to study civilizations in China and India, introducing the influential concept of "great" and "little" traditions as interdependent cultural systems. These ideas were further developed in *The Little Community* (1955) and *Peasant Society and Culture* (1956). Remaining at the University of Chicago until his death, he promoted interdisciplinary and comparative studies of civilizations. His revisit to Chan Kom in 1948 led to *A Village That Chose Progress* (1950), documenting changes over time. After his passing, his wife, Margaret Park Redfield, edited and published his collected papers (1962–63), ensuring his contributions continued to influence anthropological thought.

Folk societies tend to be homogeneous in culture. People dress alike, follow similar customs, and live by long-standing traditions. Their lifestyles are guided more by inherited norms than by rational planning. These communities are largely self-sufficient, producing goods for subsistence rather than for trade, making them relatively independent of external economies.

Kinship plays a central role in social organisation. Family ties are established by birth, and both patriarchal and matriarchal systems may coexist. The range of kinship relations is extensive, influencing not only social roles but also resource distribution and mutual responsibilities.

Magic and ritual occupy an important place in folk life. Magical practices are used to foster group cohesion and emotional unity through shared experiences. Additionally, in these societies, the sacred dominates the secular. Everyday items such as tools, food, or even the hearth are treated with reverence and often worshipped, reflecting a belief system where spiritual value is attached to material needs.

The economy of a folk society is not driven by profit or accumulation but by status and subsistence. Goods are produced and exchanged to meet communal needs, not for market gain. There is no formal concept of

saving or wealth accumulation, and although a barter system may exist, it remains focused on direct consumption rather than economic expansion. Redfield's portrayal of Tepoztlán thus served as a foundational model for understanding traditional, small-scale communities within his broader folk-urban continuum framework.

Concept of Peasant Society

In 1930, Robert Redfield conducted fieldwork in Chan kom, a village that he identified as a peasant society. Through his observations, Redfield noted the deep emotional and cultural attachment that peasants have to their land. They regard the land not merely as a source of livelihood but as a mother figure one that nurtures and sustains them, much like a mother cares for her child. The entire economy of the peasant society revolves around this land. While the peasants produce for their own consumption, they also generate a surplus which they sell in nearby urban markets, establishing an economic link with city centres.

Peasant societies, according to Redfield, are largely self-contained and maintain their own distinct indigenous culture, social structure, and values. What sets them apart from folk societies is their engagement with a market system and their interaction with urban traders. Despite this economic connection to cities, they continue to exhibit many of the same characteristics as folk societies. These include isolation, a strong sense of group identity ('we' versus 'they'), personal relationships, shared interests, kinship-based social organisation, cultural homogeneity, and a belief in magic and ritual.

Redfield identified three key attributes of peasant society. First is a reverent attitude toward land, reflecting their emotional and spiritual connection to it. Second is the belief that agriculture is virtuous, while business or commerce is viewed negatively a reflection of their moral outlook. Third is their industrious nature, where hard work is considered a core value of life. Although peasant communities retain many folk-like qualities, their contact with urban centres introduces certain urban traits into their way of life.

Therefore, Redfield concluded that peasant society occupies a middle ground between the traditional folk society and modern urban society. It blends elements of both worlds preserving the cultural simplicity and solidarity of folk communities while also adapting to the economic structures of urban markets. This positioning makes the peasant society a crucial link in understanding the broader folk-urban continuum.

Concept of Folk-Urban Continuum

The idea of the folk-urban continuum was first systematically explored by Robert Redfield, a key figure from the Chicago School of Sociology, in his influential study titled *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*, published in 1941. The concept of the rural-urban continuum concerns the social, political, cultural, and economic interactions between villages and towns or cities. This work was based on a comparative analysis of four distinct communities located in the Yucatan province of Mexico, each representing a different level of social and cultural development. Redfield chose Merida as an example of city society, Diztas as town society, Chan kom as a peasant village, and Taski as a traditional folk village. By comparing these four communities, Redfield aimed to understand the cultural contrasts between the Spanish-influenced urban centres in the northwest and the more indigenous, traditional societies of the southeastern part of the Yucatan Peninsula.

In his research, Redfield observed a clear cultural gradient among the four studied communities Merida (urban city), Diztas (town), Chan kom (peasant village), and Taski (folk village). These communities were arranged along a continuum, with Merida

representing the most urbanised and Taski the most traditional. His findings revealed significant cultural contrasts between the two extremes Taski and Merida. Meanwhile, the communities in between (Diztas and Chan kom) exhibited shared characteristics with their respective neighbours. For instance, Merida and Diztas showed similarities in their urban lifestyles, while Chan kom and Taski shared folk-like traits. Diztas and Chan kom also had overlapping features, particularly in terms of economic activity, such as the presence of shops and intermediaries. Redfield categorised Merida and Diztas as urban communities and Chan kom and Taski as folk communities. He emphasised that while no actual society perfectly represents the two ideal poles, many societies display a mix of cultural features from both ends.

His work greatly contributed to urban anthropology by exploring the connections between different types of human settlements, particularly rural and urban ones. Settlements across the world differ in many aspects such as geography, size, and structure, but they are commonly categorised into rural and urban types. Rural areas are predominantly agricultural, while urban centres are hubs for trade, commerce, and administration. Despite these distinctions, rural and urban areas are not isolated from one another. Instead, there is a constant movement of people, ideas, and cultural practices between them. This ongoing exchange forms what Redfield termed a "continuum" a seamless flow rather than a sharp divide.

The folk-urban continuum highlights the idea of continuity between village (folk) life and city (urban) life. On this continuum, village life lies at one end and urban life at the other, with various settlements in between exhibiting a mix of both characteristics. This model emphasises that rural and urban societies are interconnected and constantly influence each other. Urban influences, such as new lifestyles, values, and technologies, often make their way into rural areas. Conversely, elements of rural culture, such as traditions and social practices, can also be adopted or adapted within urban environments. This mutual influence demonstrates how villages gradually evolve into towns and eventually into cities, reflecting the dynamic nature of societal development.

The rural-urban continuum also encompasses the broader social, political, cultural, and economic interactions that occur between villages and cities. Cultural diffusion is a key part of this process. For instance, fashion trends often originate in cities and gradually spread to rural areas. Similarly, modern ideologies and ways of thinking are transmitted to villages through mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, and social media. These interactions show that the distinction between rural and urban is not rigid but fluid, with each constantly shaping the other over time.

From his study, Redfield concluded that the spatial arrangement of these communities from the isolated tribal village to the modern city also reflected a progression in social characteristics. As one moved from folk villages to urban centres, there was a clear pattern of decreasing isolation and cultural uniformity, accompanied by a corresponding increase in secularisation, individualism, and social disorganisation. These patterns supported Redfield's theory that different communities could be placed along a single continuum, ranging from a pure folk-type society at one end to an advanced urban civilisation at the other.

Redfield proposed several key hypotheses based on this continuum. First, he argued that primitive and peasant societies, due to their isolation and internal cohesion, generally resemble the 'folk' type of society. Second, when these societies come into contact with more urbanised centres, they tend to evolve in the direction of an 'urban' type. Third, he

suggested that changes within a society are interdependent meaning that transformations in one aspect (such as communication or belief systems) often lead to or coincide with changes in other areas (such as economic practices or family structures).

The folk-urban continuum, as conceived by Redfield, was a linear and one-dimensional model, linking different communities as points on a map rather than as interrelated systems. Each of the four communities studied in Yucatán was treated as a distinct stage along this continuum. The city of Mérida, representing the peak of Spanish and modern Western civilisation, stood at one end, symbolising the culmination of urbanisation and cultural transformation. Through this framework, Redfield provided a foundational model for understanding social change as a gradual shift from traditional to modern forms of life.

Robert Redfield's folk-urban continuum model, while influential, did not account for the deeper historical roots of the Mayan civilisation, which had been largely disrupted by the Spanish conquest. Redfield acknowledged that his model carried historical implications, especially in terms of the age-area principle, which suggests that older cultural traits are often found in more geographically isolated areas. He noted that the continuum could be used to form a hypothetical outline of the cultural history of Yucatán. He even drew parallels to how a journey from Paris to Sudan could sketch the broader contours of Western Europe's cultural history. However, Redfield also cautioned that such historical interpretations would be too simplistic. His study primarily focused on comparing present-day conditions among the four Yucatán communities, leaving the task of historical analysis to archaeologists and historians.

The folk-urban continuum, according to Redfield, explains how folk societies change upon contact with urban centres. As interaction with cities increases, folk societies begin to acquire urban traits, leading to a gradual transformation. These communities are often situated between literacy and illiteracy, development and underdevelopment. The influence of urban contact results in the erosion of traditional folk characteristics, such as group solidarity, kinship-based social organisation, cultural homogeneity, and social isolation. Redfield observed that increasing interaction with diverse groups leads to greater heterogeneity, the rise of a market-based economy, and signs of cultural disorganisation. He argued that the presence of these changes especially secularisation and individualisation could be traced to the breakdown of isolation and the emergence of impersonal social relationships.

Redfield's conclusions were supported by other scholars, including Sol Tax, who studied Guatemalan societies. Tax found that even small, culturally homogeneous communities exhibited impersonal relationships, weakened familial bonds, and secular behaviour. People were more motivated by personal and economic gains than by collective welfare. Redfield saw this as evidence that economic factors, such as the development of a money-based economy, could independently lead to secularisation and individualism, regardless of the degree of urban influence. He concluded that there is no single necessary cause for these transformations; different societies may follow different paths toward change.

While Redfield's continuum provides a conceptual framework for analysing societal change, it has also faced criticism. According to Miner (1952), critiques of the folk-urban continuum fall under three broad categories: (1) a mismatch between the ideal types and real-world societies, (2) difficulty in clearly defining the characteristics of ideal folk or urban societies, and (3) the model's limited ability to offer deeper theoretical insights. Ultimately, Redfield's concept remains a

useful heuristic, but it should be understood as a mental model rather than a direct reflection of empirical reality.

3.2.2.1 Continuities between Rural to Urban

Urbanisation has played a key role in strengthening the connection between rural and urban areas. Developments such as occupational diversification, expanded access to literacy and education, and the growth of mass communication have all contributed to this increasing integration. Many modern agricultural technologies and rural development programmes originate in urban centres, showing how closely linked the two areas have become. Urbanisation has also led to the commercialisation of agriculture on a large scale, while the growing demand for agricultural machinery in rural areas has, in turn, stimulated industrial growth in cities. This interdependence is evident as both rural and urban needs are increasingly met through mutual exchange.

In theoretical terms, folk society and urban society are often viewed as two ends of a continuum, representing polar opposites in terms of social structure and way of life. These are not real, concrete societies, but rather abstract models that help us understand broader social realities. According to Robert Redfield, who first introduced the concept of the folk-urban continuum, the ideal types of folk or urban society are not direct reflections of actual communities. Instead, they are constructed by isolating shared features from various societies to describe general types that could exist across different contexts.

The folk society, as described by Redfield and further explained by Mintz, is marked by isolation, cultural and genetic uniformity, slow cultural change, and pre-literate conditions. It typically consists of small populations, minimal division of labour, and simple technology, where individuals are usually self-sufficient producers. Social organisation in such societies revolves around kinship either by blood or fictive ties. Behaviour is traditional and unquestioning, and the natural world is often viewed in personal or spiritual terms. Objects and practices are often seen as sacred, with a strong emphasis on religion and ritual pervading all areas of life. In contrast, urban society is characterised by the absence or reversal of these traits diversity, secularism, literacy, and a rational, impersonal view of the world.

Redfield identified three main processes involved in the transition from folk to urban society: secularisation, individualisation, and social disorganisation. However, the extent to which these processes are interconnected is not entirely clear. Redfield acknowledged that changes in one area might occur independently of others. For example, Sol Tax observed that in parts of Guatemala, commercialism and individualism had advanced within a society that still retained many folk-like traits. Similarly, Spicer studied communities on the edge of urban centres where elements of both folk and urban life coexisted in unique combinations. These cases illustrate the complexity and variability of social change along the folk-urban continuum.

Concept of Little Community

Robert Redfield also introduced the concept of the "Little Community", which he defined as a small group of people living together and sharing common social and cultural features. In such communities, all members actively participate in collective activities and social life. Redfield referred to the little community as a “human whole”, emphasising its completeness and cohesion. He also used the term “small community” interchangeably with little community.

According to Redfield, little communities are characterised by four key features: smallness, distinctiveness, homogeneity,

and self-sufficiency. These communities possess their own unique culture, which is separate from and relatively isolated from larger societies. A community could only be considered a little community if it maintained this cultural independence and separateness from the broader world.

However, Redfield later observed that in the modern world, only two of these traits smallness and distinctiveness are still commonly found in such communities. The other two homogeneity and self-sufficiency have largely disappeared due to increasing interaction with the outside world and changes in social structures.

Redfield emphasised the importance of studying little communities because he believed they serve as basic units of society. By examining them closely, scholars could gain deeper insights into the larger society, as these communities reflect broader social patterns on a smaller, more manageable scale. For Redfield, the scientific study of little communities was a valuable tool for understanding the functioning of society as a whole.

Concept of Great and Little Traditions

While studying peasant societies, Robert Redfield identified the presence of two distinct yet interconnected traditions: the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. Though these traditions differed in origin and form, they were interrelated, interdependent, and interactive. The Great Tradition was formal, literate, and associated with the educated few. It was transmitted through written texts and institutional settings like schools and temples. In contrast, the Little Tradition was informal, oral, and rooted in the everyday life of the common people, particularly in illiterate village communities. Redfield noted that priests and teachers served as intermediaries between the two traditions, facilitating the flow of knowledge and beliefs from the Great Tradition into the lives of villagers. In this way, the Great Tradition was maintained through formal institutions, while the Little Tradition sustained itself through lived practices and oral transmission.

An example of this dynamic can be seen in the context of India, where religious centres such as Gaya and Kashi represent the Great Tradition. These centres host traditional schools and temples where religious teachings, Sanskrit, and sacred texts are taught. Mahanthas and pandits lead worship and educate their disciples, who then travel to villages to raise funds and spread religious teachings. Through storytelling and explanations of myths, legends, and pilgrimage practices, they engage directly with peasant communities, reinforcing spiritual beliefs and encouraging ritual practices among the villagers. These teachings are passed down orally across generations, becoming part of the daily religious life of the peasants.

Thus, Redfield's concept illustrates how the Great Tradition interacts with and influences the Little Tradition through the efforts of cultural specialists figures like priests and teachers who act as mediators between the two realms. This interaction helps embed formal religious and cultural values into the practices of village life while also allowing the Great Tradition to remain vibrant and relevant within a rural context. Through this model, Redfield highlighted the ongoing exchange between elite and popular culture, showing how complex and interconnected cultural systems are in traditional societies.

Recap

- Ferdinand Tönnies made a significant contribution by introducing the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in 1887.
- Tönnies used the term Gemeinschaft to describe forms of social life characterised by close, personal, and exclusive relationships within a single, unified community.
- In Gemeinschaft, relationships such as those within a family are lifelong and marked by shared joys and sorrows.
- Gemeinschaft emphasises collective identity, emotional closeness, and moral unity, while Gesellschaft centres on individualism, rational calculation, and contractual ties.
- Tönnies argued that the historical shift from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft was driven largely by the expansion of trade and the rise of industrial capitalism.
- In 1927–28, Robert Redfield conducted fieldwork in the traditional village of Tepoztlán, which later became the subject of his 1930 publication.
- Folk societies tend to be homogeneous in culture.
- The economy of a folk society is not driven by profit or accumulation but by status and subsistence.
- In 1930, Redfield conducted fieldwork in Chan kom, a village that he identified as a peasant society.
- The folk-urban continuum highlights the idea of continuity between village (folk) life and city (urban) life.
- The idea of the folk-urban continuum was first systematically explored by Redfield in his influential study titled *The Folk Culture of Yucatan,* published in 1941.
- Urbanisation has played a key role in strengthening the connection between rural and urban areas.
- Redfield identified three main processes involved in the transition from folk to urban society: secularisation, individualisation, and social disorganisation.
- Redfield also introduced the concept of the "Little Community," which he defined as a small group of people living together and sharing common social and cultural features.

- While studying peasant societies, Redfield identified the presence of two distinct yet interconnected traditions: the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition.

Objective Questions

1. Who introduced the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to describe forms of social organisation?
2. What type of human will underlies Gemeinschaft according to Tönnies?
3. What is meant by Gesellschaft?
4. According to Tönnies, what major social force disrupted Gemeinschaft?
5. In Gesellschaft, how is social order primarily maintained, as per Tönnies?
6. Which Mexican village did Redfield study as an example of a folk society?
7. What distinguishes peasant societies from folk societies in Redfield's framework?
8. What are the key features of Redfield's "Little Community"?
9. In the folk-urban continuum, which city did Redfield classify as the most urbanised in his Yucatan study?
10. What is the main difference between the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition, as per Redfield?

Answers

1. Ferdinand Tönnies
2. Natural will
3. Goal-oriented and impersonal relationships
4. Expansion of trade and industrial capitalism
5. Using formal laws and contracts
6. Tepoztlán

7. Economic interaction with urban markets
8. Smallness, distinctiveness, homogeneity, and self-sufficiency
9. Mérida
10. The Great Tradition is literate and formal; the Little Tradition is oral and informal

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate the key differences between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, and explain how they represent different stages in social evolution.
2. Discuss how Tönnies integrates legal concepts from Henry Maine's Ancient Law into his theory of urbanisation and social change.
3. Examine the role of capitalism in the transition from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, and assess Tönnies's hope for reform through cooperative structures.
4. Explain the concept of the Folk-Urban Continuum and critically assess its relevance in understanding rural-urban interactions in contemporary society.
5. Discuss the role of kinship, magic, and ritual in folk and peasant societies, using Redfield's ethnographic findings as a basis.
6. Evaluate Robert Redfield's concepts of the Great and Little Traditions. How do they reflect the interaction between elite and popular culture in traditional societies?

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UNIT 3

Manuel Castells and David Harvey

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- comprehend major theoretical perspectives on urbanization and urban social life
- examine Castells' political economy paradigm
- explain Castells's theory of political economy to analyse urban challenges, urban movements and urbanization process
- assess the Marxian approach of David Harvey to urban social systems and social life

Prerequisite

It is important for sociology learners to grasp a few foundational ideas before diving into the urbanization theories of David Harvey and Manuel Castells. First, urbanization is more than just the growth of cities it involves changes in social structures, economic systems, and patterns of daily life. Think of it as a puzzle where economics, politics, technology, and culture are all interconnected pieces. Understanding concepts such as capitalism, globalization, social movements, and spatial organisation will help you see how both Harvey and Castells interpret the forces shaping modern cities. Harvey approaches cities through a critical Marxist lens, focusing on how capitalist systems shape urban spaces, while Castells introduces the idea of networks, communication flows, and the role of technology in shaping social relations.

Imagine you're walking through a city, noticing skyscrapers, public parks, crowded housing areas, and tech hubs Harvey would ask, "Who benefits from these developments, and who is left out?" while Castells would add, "How do these spaces

connect through flows of information, power, and people?" In this way, studying their theories is like putting on two different pairs of glasses one highlighting economic power and inequality, the other showing the invisible networks that keep cities alive. By the end, you won't just see cities as collections of buildings; you'll see them as dynamic systems shaped by history, politics, technology, and human struggle.

Keywords

Political economy paradigm, Collective consumption, Gentrification, Spatial fix

Discussion

Manuel Castells, a leading advocate of the political economy perspective, presented a Marxist interpretation of urban issues in his 1977 work *The Urban Question*, positioning it as an alternative to the prevailing urban theories of the time. Castells argued that urbanism is not an actual concept but rather a myth, as it narrates human history through an ideological lens. He criticised the urbanism approach, viewing it as a cultural product of capitalist industrialisation, the growth of the market economy, and the rationalisation of modern society a process others have labelled as modernisation or westernisation. According to him, urban sociology based on urbanism reflects an ideology of modernity, ethnocentrically linked to the development of the social structures of liberal capitalism.

3.3.1. Manuel Castells' Theory of Urbanisation

Castells viewed cities as historical outcomes shaped by power dynamics and production relations within capitalism. He criticised urban studies that examined elites and power relations in isolation from the broader structures of inequality in capitalist society, arguing that such approaches hid the true origins of inequality and conflict. The idea of an "urban crisis," he suggested, functioned ideologically by framing issues rooted in production relations and ultimately solvable through class struggle as uniquely urban problems. In his view, measures like relocating the poor to public housing or redeveloping inner-city areas in response to the so-called urban crisis merely concealed the underlying goal of facilitating capitalist redevelopment.

Drawing on Althusser's theories, Castells argued that the urban system plays a specific economic role within the overall social structure. While production and exchange operate on regional, national, or global scales, consumption is primarily organised at the urban level, making the city essentially a system of consumption. Consumption not only sustains production since production cannot exist without it but also enables the reproduction of labour through access to housing, healthcare, food, education, and leisure. This reproduction involves both maintaining the current workforce and generating the next generation of workers, achieved physically and socially through socialisation. The facilities that make this possible such as schools, hospitals, and other public services are inherently urban features.

For Castells, urban space is the central setting where labour reproduction is concentrated, encompassing both private (self-provided) and collective (state-supported) forms of consumption. He describes the city as a built environment, a subsystem shaped by the broader structural system of economic, political, and ideological relations. In his view, urban areas represent a distinct spatial organisation of society's economic structures, with the modern city serving as a tangible manifestation of capitalism. He further interprets the patterns of segregation and expansion within urban spaces as outcomes of capital accumulation and class struggle.

Manuel Castells, born in Spain in 1942, is a renowned sociologist and professor of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has taught since 1979. His academic journey began in Spain but was interrupted by his political activism against Franco's dictatorship, leading him to Paris as a political refugee. There, he earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Paris in 1967, later obtaining multiple doctorates in human sciences and sociology. Castells taught at the University of Paris from 1967 to 1979, where he became a leading figure in urban sociology. His first major work, *La Question Urbaine* (1972), became a classic and helped establish the New Urban Sociology. Later works such as *The City and the Grassroots* (1983) and *The Informational City* (1989) cemented his reputation as a pioneering scholar in the study of urban social movements, community organisation, and the impact of information technology on urban development.

3.3.1.1. Castells' Political Economy Paradigm

In modern society, the concentration of capital has gone hand in hand with the spatial concentration of populations and the means of consumption. Consumption has increasingly been collectivised and supplied by the state. Urban problems emerge when the urban system fails to provide the necessary conditions for reproducing labour to meet the needs of capital. Rather than individual capitalist enterprises directly ensuring the reproduction of use values like housing, education, and healthcare, this responsibility is transferred to the state to guarantee a stable workforce and the smooth operation of the urban order. Many of these services have exchange values that fall short of their use values meaning they cannot be produced at a cost affordable to workers so the state steps in to make them accessible. Through collective consumption, the state maintains the labour force, mitigates unrest among lower classes, stimulates demand, and supports private sector profitability through public investment.

According to Castells, the new urban politics centres on struggles over collective consumption. Urban issues expose the inequalities and structural contradictions of capitalism, bringing together diverse social groups in ways that are less likely in the sphere of production, where occupations are highly differentiated. While wealthier groups may avoid some urban problems like traffic or pollution, they can still see how these crises burden other classes, creating a shared sense of interest and uniting various classes and social actors in urban struggles.

Castells argues that state-led initiatives for citizen participation are essentially attempts to foster social cohesion and community as a response to these conflicts.

While most political economy approaches to urban sociology in the 1970s were rooted in the Marxist tradition, the 1980s saw a shift toward combining Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives. Since then, political economy analyses of cities have increasingly focused on the role of the state and public policy, the influence of local history, and the unique circumstances that shape each city as a distinct case. They have also paid more attention to the influence of elites and even coalitions of ordinary citizens in determining a locality's future (Flanagan, 1993).

In *The City and the Grassroots* (1983), Castells moved away from his earlier Marxist emphasis on class struggle as the main driver of social change. He argued that social class is only one basis among many for forming urban coalitions, alongside other interest groups that seek to shape the meaning and identity of a city or its parts. According to Castells, the symbolic meaning of an urban area emerges partly from competition among different groups seeking control over urban space. He also identified other forces behind urban change, such as the independent role of the state, gender dynamics, ethnic and national movements, and self-identified citizens' movements.

By the 1990s, Castells turned his attention to the effects of capitalist restructuring and globalisation on urban economies and societies. In *The Informational City*, he argued that capitalism in the US and other advanced economies had been reorganised to address inflation and declining profit rates. This restructuring involved concentrating knowledge for profit while outsourcing factories and jobs to low-wage, non-unionised developing countries. Production became more flexible, operating through loosely connected networks led by elite experts and enabled by new communication technologies. The geographic clustering of such information and communication hubs was termed "technopoles" by Hall.

In the late 1990s, Castells released a three-volume work on the information age. In the first volume, he explored how new information technologies and the internet accelerate time and compress space, a phenomenon he termed the "space of flows." The second volume examined the impact of feminism, noting that while it has expanded employment opportunities and challenged patriarchy within the family, it has not achieved gender equality. Instead, it has contributed to growing isolation between men and women in the information economy, the weakening of family structures, and the neglect of children. Revisiting his focus on social movements, Castells argued that these movements are no longer primarily class-based but stem from individual isolation in a networked society. He also highlighted the significance of the global environmental movement, describing the spread of ecological awareness as one of the most important political shifts of the past thirty years. In the third volume, Castells discussed the social polarisation caused by unequal access to information technologies and the rise of a global criminal economy.

In *The Urban Question*, Castells proposed a model explaining the dynamics of the urban system, introducing "urban social movements" as a key mechanism for structural change. At the core of his theory, Castells identified three main themes around which urban protest movements tend to form:

1. Demands related to collective consumption,
2. The protection of cultural identity linked to and organised within a specific territory, and

3. Political mobilisation in relation to the state, with particular attention to the role of local government.

Castells highlights the central role of spatial relations in mobilising social movements that address issues of collective consumption, cultural identity, and local governance. He notes that spatial arrangements influence a movement's ability to gather resources, while oppressive spatial forms can generate grievances that drive activism. Equally significant is how movements themselves create and shape spaces as part of their mobilisation strategies. His concept of the "space of places" later evolved into the "space of flows" under the informational mode of development, offering a framework for understanding the relationship between space, place, and society in social science.

Citizens have engaged in collective action to address a variety of urban challenges. In many contexts, these challenges include housing shortages, widening gaps between rents and wages, poor maintenance by landlords, and inadequate healthcare and education systems issues closely tied to collective consumption. In developing nations, urban residents often face a lack of essential services such as water supply, sewage systems, and electricity. Other concerns, such as displacement and the destruction of cherished urban landscapes, stem from urban planning decisions. Additionally, some groups organise around specific grievances, such as opposition to housing policies or property taxes.

Urban movements tend to employ a familiar set of actions, often overlapping with broader social movements, though certain tactics such as rent strikes, squatting, or proposing alternative spatial plans are distinctly urban. These movements can be organised from the bottom up, with grassroots networks of activists, committees, newsletters, and neighbourhood groups, or from the top down, through political parties or organised groups. However, top-down involvement is often criticised for fostering bureaucracy and undermining ideals of self-management. Many urban movements have succeeded in crossing social boundaries, engaging participants from different class backgrounds, or involving middle-class activists in support of poorer communities. Others, however, remain limited by ethnicity, class, or age.

Protest objectives in urban movements are often concrete and measurable such as halting unwanted urban developments, ensuring building repairs, closing streets to through traffic, preventing evictions, or securing rent reductions. The outcomes of these movements vary, with both successes and failures shaping their historical impact.

Studies of urban movements often go beyond documenting successes and failures in isolated conflicts, focusing instead on their potential to bring about broader social change. Castells, in particular, sought to develop a general theory. Initially, he argued that urban movements played a latent role in class struggle, becoming significant only if they connected with organisations engaged in production-based class conflict. Later, he emphasised that their local focus could precede changes in production, communication, and governance. According to him, the type of social change they could foster ranged from resisting domination to reshaping the "urban meaning," leading to what he called "reactive utopias."

Castells identified three main goals for urban movements to reach their full transformative potential: (1) meeting collective consumption needs while promoting the city as a space of use rather than a commodity, (2) fostering an independent cultural identity and encouraging two-way communication instead of one-way programmed information, and (3) achieving

territorially based self-management. Additional criteria included awareness of belonging to a wider movement, solidarity with other groups, public expression of movement themes, and maintaining links with professionals and political parties while preserving autonomy.

He also analysed the rise, decline, and transformation of these movements, noting the importance of context particularly whether urban managers reframed social problems as individual or technical issues. Effective mobilisation also depended on activists' ability to articulate problems, assign responsibility, and propose solutions. Movements typically follow a life cycle, with institutionalisation (embedding in formal rules and laws) and cooptation (taking on roles assigned by government) often signalling their decline. While such processes can dampen the drive for change, they may also help secure past gains. Moreover, local governments, caught between cutting welfare costs and addressing poverty, increasingly co-opt urban movements sometimes engaging them as managers of self-help programmes.

Dimensions of Urban Communities

Castells identified three key dimensions shaping urban communities: production, power, and experience. In other words, the economic structure, the role of the state and its institutions, and the ways people engage in collective action within city life. Reflecting on the 21st century as the Information Age and the rise of the internet, he stressed that government actions, social movements, and commercial activities influence the urban agenda, though he viewed such movements as short-lived and often fading away. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that urbanisation, being dynamic, allows for significant change. Recognised as one of the most prominent modern urban sociologists, Castells was deeply influenced by cyberspace, famously stating that "modern societies are increasingly structured around the bipolar opposition of the Net and the Self."

He introduced the idea of "collective consumption" services like public transportation and public housing which encompass a broad range of social struggles that shift from the economic to the political sphere through state intervention. Moving beyond strict Marxist views in the early 1980s, Castells turned his focus to how new technologies were reshaping economies. In 1989, he coined the term "space of flows" to describe the physical and non-physical elements of global information networks that enable real-time, long-distance economic coordination. During the 1990s, he brought together his research on technology and urban change in his influential trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* consisting of *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), *The Power of Identity* (1997), and *End of Millennium* (1998) which received widespread critical acclaim in academic circles worldwide.

In *The Information Age*, he argues that "our societies are increasingly structured around the bipolar opposition of the Net and the Self." Here, the "Net" refers to network-based organisations that are replacing traditional, vertically integrated hierarchies as the dominant model of social organisation, while the "Self" represents the ways individuals reaffirm their social identity and sense of meaning within an ever-evolving cultural context. Concerns about city life and urban spaces existed long before urban sociology emerged as a distinct discipline in the early 20th century, marked by the research and theoretical contributions of the Chicago School. The ecological model developed by Robert Park and his colleagues, along with Louis Wirth's cultural perspective, drew significant attention from social scientists. While early Chicago School figures like Park focused mainly on the spatial organisation of cities, Wirth emphasised the

concept of "urbanism," exploring the specific traits of city dwellers and how urban life shaped this unique culture. Although these approaches initially dominated urban studies, later scholarship began to interpret urban phenomena through alternative frameworks.

By the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a growing scholarly interest in applying historical materialism to analyse urban conditions. Manuel Castells emerged as a key figure in this shift, using a Marxist framework to examine urban life. He aimed to reshape urban studies by critically assessing prevailing ideas and definitions of "the urban." While Castells later moved away from many aspects of his early work, his writings from this period played a pivotal role in establishing what came to be known as "the new urban sociology," leaving a profound and lasting impact on the field's development.

3.3.2. Marxian Approach of David Harvey

David Harvey argues that urbanism is not an independent process but is closely tied to broader political and economic forces and transformations. In the context of modern urbanism, he notes that urban space is constantly being reshaped, a process influenced by large corporations deciding where to establish businesses and factories, as well as by government policies, regulations, and initiatives that can alter a city's physical form. Like other critical theorists, Harvey emphasises that a city's spatial structure is deeply connected to wider societal processes.

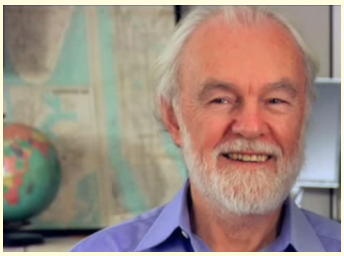
Harvey sought to build a critical theory explaining the uneven geographical development of capitalism over time, with "the urban" emerging as a central category of analysis. Historians have long maintained that cities are key to understanding the historical evolution of world markets, and Harvey focuses on the forces that both create and dismantle urban forms of social life. Drawing on Marx's idea that capital should be understood not as a static "thing" but as an ongoing social process, Harvey sees the urban as the arena where capitalism's contradictions become most visible in the shaping of landscapes, institutions, and cultures. For Marx, transforming the world depends on understanding how capital operates; for Harvey, it starts with grasping how capital urbanises. His revisiting of Lefebvre's concept of "the right to the city" reflects his ability to keep Marxist thought relevant to present-day political debates an ability grounded in his distinctive and original understanding of spatial dynamics.

The most fitting concept to explain the urban dimension of Harvey's theory is the idea of the "spatial fix." This term refers to how cities are shaped by the internal tensions between the use value and the exchange value of space. It challenges a central assumption in economic theory that economic growth requires the integration of capital into land, labour, and technology. From a Marxist perspective, capital accumulation does not emerge naturally from market exchange or industrial development, but from a "primary" circuit of productive investment aimed at capturing ever-greater surpluses of value produced by labour. Harvey notes that large-scale investments in physical infrastructure and social institutions tie up capital for long periods, creating long-term commitments that affect economic dynamics.

The "spatial fix" highlights the social consequences of anchoring capital and labour in a specific place over time. In the 19th century, this process took shape in the factory the core production unit that exploited an industrial workforce. Harvey extends this idea by asking how fixed investment functions not only within production sites but also across the broader sphere of social reproduction. As urban development absorbs growing amounts of economic resources, capital can remain

locked in the process for months or even years. This immobilisation creates spatio-temporal constraints on capital, limiting its mobility and preventing it from existing in its most fluid form money-capital that can freely pursue profit. In the contemporary world, Harvey suggests, globalisation represents the most prominent example of this process.

Through his concept of "time space compression," Harvey argues that



David Harvey, born in 1935, is one of the world's most cited geographers and has played a defining role in shaping urban theory and the philosophy of geography. A distinguished professor of anthropology at the City University of New York, and formerly a professor at Johns Hopkins and Oxford, Harvey's academic journey began with his BA, MA, and PhD from Cambridge. His early career at the University of Bristol was marked by his leadership in the "Quantitative Revolution," which emphasised analytical rigour, statistical precision, and the search for universal spatial laws. His seminal work, *Explanation in Geography* (1969), became a foundational text for a new generation of geographers. However, his move to Johns Hopkins in 1969 coincided with a period of political upheaval urban protests, racial segregation crises, and anti-Vietnam War movements which steered his focus toward the social realities of urban life, particularly in Baltimore. Harvey's shift from positivist geography to Marxist analysis culminated in *Social Justice and the City* (1973), which redefined urban studies through a critical, class-based lens. Over the next five decades, he continuously adapted Marx's theories to address the complexities of global urban capitalism ranging from postindustrial to algorithmic economies while engaging with diverse intellectual currents such as feminism, environmentalism, postmodernism, and decolonial thought. His historical-geographical materialist approach has influenced both academic scholarship and grassroots activism, particularly through "Right to the City" movements advocating for housing rights, racial justice, and urban equity. By bridging rigorous theory with political praxis, Harvey has become a central figure in understanding how capitalist urbanisation shapes social, economic, and environmental inequalities on a planetary scale.

capitalism's constant need for liquidity its drive to remove the barriers of both space and time produces a distinctly metropolitan culture. His examination of how the state uses cities to bind people's lives to market forces carries a strong Marxist influence. Harvey contends that the post-war transition from urban capitalism to neoliberal systems of flexible employment has profoundly shaped the development of urban spaces. It is hardly an overstatement to say that his ideas are central to the critical foundations of urban studies. His work has served as a theoretical sharpening tool, strengthening critiques of globalisation, neoliberal urbanism, and gentrification. However, Harvey's structuralist approach, grounded in a "capitalocentric" view of history, leaves little room for alternative post-Marxist interpretations. He is also criticised for prioritising theory over empirical analysis of how capitalism moulds cities in its own image an ongoing debate within the field.

Despite these critiques, Harvey's work remains deeply relevant for understanding the urban future of capital accumulation and class struggle. His critique directly challenges

the so-called "new urban agenda," which frames cities as global hubs of "smart" economic growth. From his perspective, neoliberal urbanisation particularly through the privatisation of physical and social infrastructure represents a regressive form of accumulation, one that uses urban processes to entangle society in a network of rent-seeking arrangements. Harvey's focus on social reproduction as a site of value extraction also connects to a growing body of research exploring how biological, environmental, bodily, cultural, and social aspects of life are being increasingly commodified and financialised.

A further contribution of Harvey's thought lies in what could be described as its "performative" dimension. His work does more than analyse urban capitalism; it actively shapes how scholars, activists, and policymakers frame and confront urban issues. By linking economic critique to spatial theory, Harvey's analyses provide both an intellectual framework and a political impetus for resisting neoliberal urbanisation, thereby influencing both academic debate and real-world struggles over the shape and purpose of cities.

Recap

- Castells viewed cities as historical outcomes shaped by power dynamics and production relations within capitalism.
- In *The City and the Grassroots* (1983), Castells moved away from his earlier Marxist emphasis on class struggle as the main driver of social change.
- In *The Informational City*, he argued that capitalism in the US and other advanced economies had been reorganised to address inflation and declining profit rates.
- In *The Urban Question*, Castells proposed a model explaining the dynamics of the urban system, introducing "urban social movements" as a key mechanism for structural change.
- Castells highlights the central role of spatial relations in mobilising social movements that address issues of collective consumption, cultural identity, and local governance.
- Castells identified three main goals for urban movements to reach their full transformative potential.
- Castells identified three key dimensions shaping urban communities: production, power, and experience.
- David Harvey argues that urbanism is not an independent process but is closely tied to broader political and economic forces and transformations.

- The most fitting concept to explain the urban dimension of Harvey's theory is the idea of the "spatial fix."
- The "spatial fix" highlights the social consequences of anchoring capital and labour in a specific place over time.
- He introduced the idea of "collective consumption" services like public transportation and public housing which encompass a broad range of social struggles that shift from the economic to the political sphere through state intervention.

Objective Questions

1. Who authored the book *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*?
2. According to Castells, what is the primary focus of the new urban politics?
3. Why does the state often take responsibility for services like housing, education, and healthcare in urban systems?
4. In The City and the Grassroots (1983), what did Castells identify as one basis among many for forming urban coalitions?
5. What term did Peter Hall use to describe the geographic clustering of information and communication hubs?
6. What phenomenon did Castells describe as the acceleration of time and compression of space by new information technologies and the internet?
7. Name the three main themes around which Castells argued urban protest movements tend to form.
8. In *The Information Age*, what does the "Net" refer to in Castells' "Net and the Self" concept?
9. What early 20th-century urban sociology school did Castells' work challenge and move beyond?
10. According to David Harvey, what concept best explains the urban dimension of his theory?
11. What does Harvey's concept of "time–space compression" describe?

12. Who authored the work of *The City and the Grassroots*?

13. Which earlier thinker's concept of "the right to the city" does Harvey revisit in his work?

Answers

1. Castells

2. Struggles over collective consumption

3. Because their exchange values fall short of their use values, making them unaffordable for workers, and the state ensures accessibility to maintain a stable workforce.

4. Social class, alongside other interest groups seeking to shape the meaning and identity of urban areas.

5. Technopoles.

6. The "space of flows."

7. Demands related to collective consumption, (2) protection of cultural identity linked to specific territories, and (3) political mobilisation in relation to the state.

8. Network-based organisations replacing traditional, vertically integrated hierarchies as the dominant model of social organisation.

9. The Chicago School of urban sociology.

10. The "spatial fix."

11. Capitalism's constant drive to remove the barriers of both space and time, producing a distinctly metropolitan culture.

12. Castells

13. Henri Lefebvre.

Assignments

1. Discuss the concept of "collective consumption" in Castells' political economy paradigm. How does it link the economic and political spheres in urban sociology?

2. Explain the three main themes around which Castells argues urban protest movements tend to form. Provide examples of each.

3. Assess how Castells' views on urban social movements evolved from his early Marxist approach to his later work in the Information Age.

4. Critically examine David Harvey's concept of the "spatial fix" and explain how it relates to the tensions between use value and exchange value in urban space.

5. Discuss how Harvey's integration of Marx's theory of capital with the concept of urbanisation contributes to contemporary debates on neoliberal urbanism and globalisation.

6. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of Harvey's structuralist approach in understanding the political and economic forces shaping cities.

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BLOCK

Urban Ecology

UNIT 1

Urban Ecology: Definitions and Processes

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- discuss the concept of ecology and urban ecology in sociology
- examine the roots and development of urban ecology
- explain urban biodiversity and the role of green spaces in urban areas
- analyse the importance of urban ecological processes

Prerequisite

Picture a world where most of humanity lives, works, and plays not amidst sprawling natural landscapes, but within bustling, complex human-made environments: cities. For centuries, cities have been centres of innovation, culture, and social interaction, but their rapid expansion in the 20th century presented a new challenge and a fascinating puzzle for sociologists. How do these concrete jungles, with their towering buildings, intricate networks of roads, and diverse populations, truly function? Early urban sociologists, much like scientists studying a new species, became captivated by the 'morphology' of cities, seeking to uncover the hidden rules governing their growth and change. This intellectual curiosity blossomed into a unique field – urban ecology – which applies an ecological lens to understand the intricate social and spatial patterns that emerge as people cluster and interact in urban settings.

Drawing inspiration from how plants adapt and compete in their natural habitats, these pioneering scholars realised that human populations within cities also engage in a dynamic interplay with their environment and with each other. From the competition for desirable land to the formation of distinct neighbourhoods, urban ecologists began to see cities as a kind of human ecosystem, where social groups, economic forces, and physical spaces are constantly shaping one another. This perspective

transformed our understanding of urban life, moving beyond mere description to a systematic analysis of how cities evolve, how resources are distributed, and how diverse communities find their place within the vibrant, ever-changing urban tapestry.

Keywords

Ecology, Urban geography, Invasion, Succession, Segregation, Centralisation, Concentration

Discussion

As cities in the early twentieth century began to take shape and change, some sociologists dedicated a significant portion of their work to understanding the morphology of cities. They developed predictive models to identify general patterns of urban growth and change. These early efforts led to the development of a subdiscipline of urban sociology known as urban ecology. Rooted in the traditions of the Chicago School of urban sociology, this approach aimed to uncover systematic relationships among the various types of land uses commonly found in urban areas. Urban sociology provides a systematic approach to the study of urban society. The importance of a city's physical location and how people arrange themselves within the urban area has led urbanists to develop two related areas of study:

- Urban Geography: which focuses on the significance of the city's location and natural resources.
- Urban Ecology: the analysis of how people spread out within an urban area.

4.1.1 The Concept of Human Ecology in Sociology

Sociologists borrowed the term "ecology" from natural science. Similarly, the term "human ecology" was used by Park and subsequently gained prominence through McKenzie and others. While plants and human beings are not directly comparable, both grow and develop, requiring sustenance. However, plants and human beings are two distinct creations of nature, though both can be transported from one setting to another. Humans are motile, unlike plants. Humans actively shape their environment by creating conditions, seizing opportunities, modifying circumstances, and introducing innovations. They may abandon one place to occupy another while sometimes maintaining a modified relationship with native populations. Human beings improve their quality of life and living conditions by building relationships within their settlements, which are essentially human social environments of their own creation.

4.1.1.1 Definitions of Human Ecology

- J. A. Quinn regards human ecology as a specific branch of science dealing with "the study of relations between man and environment."
- Gist and Halbert define human ecology as "the study of the spatial distribution of persons and institutions in the city and the processes involved in the formation of patterns of distribution."

- According to Hawley, human ecology refers to the development and organisation of the community.

4.1.2 Roots and Development of Urban Ecology

Urban ecology, an approach to understanding urban spatial distribution, was originally developed in the 1920s by a small but influential group of sociologists at the University of Chicago (the Chicago School of Sociology or human ecology). The key figures of the Chicago School included Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, Roderick D. McKenzie, and Amos H. Hawley. This field applies biological principles to explain how urban populations are spatially distributed. This distribution is seen as a result of "biotic" competition among human groups defined by shared social characteristics, such as class or ethnicity, competing for territorial advantage.

The Chicago School introduced these theories into sociology to explain how social groups compete for limited resources, such as land, within cities. This competition was believed to enhance efficiency and foster a greater division of labour. The struggles resulting from this competition led to distinctive social groups adapting to their local urban environments, much like how competition and adaptation in the natural world result in specialisation. The interplay between competition and cooperation ultimately serves to assign individuals within a population to specific urban niches.

4.1.2.1 Meaning and Definition of Urban Ecology

Urban ecology, a vital subdiscipline within urban sociology, is fundamentally concerned with understanding cities as dynamic, living systems. Drawing inspiration from biological ecology, which studies the relationships between organisms and their natural environments, urban ecology examines the complex interactions between human populations and the built and natural environments within urban areas. It is the study of ecosystems that includes humans living in cities and urbanising landscapes. Urban ecology posits that cities are not merely collections of buildings, but complex ecosystems where social groups, economic activities, and spatial arrangements constantly interact and influence one another, shaping the unique character and evolution of urban life.

It has deep roots in many disciplines, including geography, sociology, urban planning, landscape architecture, engineering, economics, anthropology, climatology, public health, and ecology. Because of its interdisciplinary nature and unique focus on humans and natural systems within urbanised areas, 'urban ecology' has been used variously to describe the study of humans in cities, nature in cities, and the coupled relationships of humans and nature (Endlicher et al., 2007).

While retaining its focus on human-environment interactions, urban ecology now also investigates issues such as urban biodiversity, ecosystem services provided by urban green spaces, urban climate change impacts, and the flow of resources and waste within urban systems. Essentially, urban ecology offers a comprehensive framework for systematically studying urban society, helping us understand how cities function, change, and can be made more sustainable and livable for their diverse inhabitants.

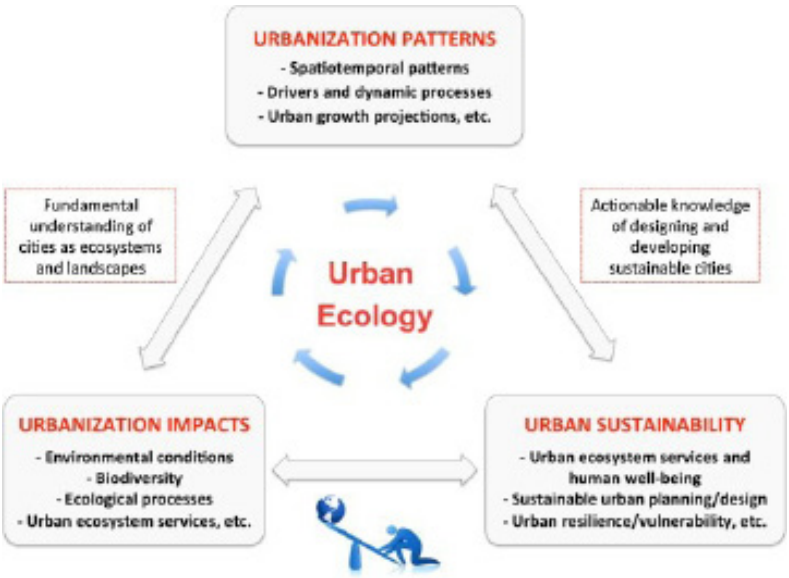

Fig. 4.1.1 A triadic conceptualisation of contemporary urban ecology
Source: J. Wu / Landscape and Urban Planning 125 (2014) 209–221

4.1.2.2 Definition of Urban Ecology

Ecologists, as well as urban geographers, planners, and social scientists, have all attempted to define urban ecology in their own preferred ways.

Park, Burgess, and McKenzie (1925) defined urban ecology as "the study of the relationship between people and their urban environment."

Rebele (1994) described urban ecology as "a sub-discipline of ecology" that is "concerned with the distribution and abundance of plants and animals in towns and cities."

Luck and Wu (2002) described urban ecology as the study of understanding "the relationship between the spatial pattern of urbanisation and ecological processes."

Alberti (2008) defined urban ecology as "the study of the ways that human and ecological systems evolve together in urbanising regions."

McDonnell (2011) stated that "urban ecology integrates both basic (i.e. fundamental) and applied (i.e. problem-oriented), natural and social science research to explore and elucidate the multiple dimensions of urban ecosystems."

Pickett et al. (2011) stated that "urban ecology has focused on designing the environmental amenities of cities for people, and on reducing environmental impacts of urban regions."

4.1.2.3 The City as a New Type of Urban Ecosystem

Cities represent a unique kind of environment, differing significantly from non-urban areas. While many factors influencing urban ecosystems are also present elsewhere, their specific combination in cities fosters the development of unique ecosystems with species peculiar to urban settings. Unlike natural ecosystems, urban ecosystems are a hybrid of natural and man-made elements, whose interactions are affected not only by the natural environment but also by culture, personal behaviour, politics, economics, and social organisation.

Urban Climate

Urban climate refers to the long-term

behaviour of the atmosphere in a specific urban area, characterised by factors such as temperature, pressure, wind, precipitation, cloud cover, and humidity. Cities typically experience higher temperatures than surrounding open lands and forests due to a phenomenon known as the Urban Heat Island Effect (UHIE). This is primarily because the materials commonly used in urban construction, such as the walls and roofs of buildings and asphalt pavements, have a greater radiative surface area compared to natural landscapes. This increased surface area leads to a higher absorption of solar energy.

Furthermore, the urban environment's water management contributes to this warming. Precipitation in cities rapidly flows into sewage systems via impervious surfaces like asphalt roads and squares. This quick runoff means that less moisture is available in urban areas compared to the more humid ground in open lands. As a result, solar radiation is more effective at heating these dry urban surfaces, leading to a higher degree of warming.

Urban Hydrology

Urban hydrology encompasses the movement, distribution, and quality of water in and around cities and towns. It is an area of study that recognises the profound impact urbanisation has on the natural water cycle. It is a critical consideration in city planning, directly influencing a city's water supply and even its heat economy; it fundamentally involves understanding how cities change the natural water cycle. In typical urban environments, a significant amount of precipitation that falls on roofs, asphalt roads, and city centres is quickly lost. This water rapidly drains into sewer systems through surface runoff, causing cities to become dry and warmer much faster than natural landscapes. Because this precipitation is channeled away, humidity levels in cities are often lower than in forested areas. Interestingly, despite the dryness, cities may experience frequent fog due to the high concentration of solid structures.

However, within the framework of urban hydrologic processes, elements such as trees and soils can play a crucial role in managing precipitation. They can intercept and retain rainwater or at least slow its flow as it reaches the ground. This natural infrastructure has the potential to significantly reduce the frequency and volume of stormwater runoff, mitigate flooding damage, decrease stormwater treatment costs, and alleviate other water quality issues.

Urban Soil

Understanding and analysing urban soil features is paramount in city planning for two key reasons. Firstly, soil provides the geological foundation for all structural projects, from buildings and tunnels to subways. Secondly, it is essential to know the soil's characteristics for successful plant growth.

The physical attributes of soil, such as its depth, mechanical structure, general composition, groundwater level, and geological basis are vital not only for major constructions like tunnels and buildings but also for all urban infrastructure, including road systems, sewage, and cesspools. Since soil is the natural environment for plants, determining its features is especially important for planning and creating green spaces within the city. Therefore, during urban development, it is crucial to conduct soil analyses to identify areas with suitable soil for construction, mark them on maps, and then analyse the relationship between the soil's characteristics and how best to utilise it.

However, the reality of urban soil often presents challenges. In areas designated for greenery near buildings, the soil frequently

loses its original genetic characteristics and becomes contaminated with construction debris like cement and concrete. Consequently, when creating green areas in these spots, new soil free of concrete but rich in organic materials is often trucked in and spread in a thin layer. This means that the natural soil features, which are crucial for plant growth, rarely survive in urban settings. For plants intended for urban environments, designers must prioritise factors like the shadows cast by buildings, windbreaks, the negative effects of salts sprayed on roads in winter, and flue gas. Given these challenges, the plant species chosen for urban design must possess broad ecological tolerance, meaning they should be highly resilient to negative human-induced impacts.

Urban Biodiversity

Urban biodiversity is vital for a healthy planet and human well-being but faces severe threats from habitat loss and climate change. The theme "Harmony with nature and sustainable development" stresses the urgent need to integrate ecological conservation into urban growth.

Urban biodiversity significantly enhances the quality of life for city dwellers, a fact clearly demonstrated in European urban settings. City residents directly benefit from the recreational, social, and inspirational services that nature provides, both within and beyond the city limits. Beyond these aesthetic and well-being advantages, healthy urban ecosystems are fundamental for maintaining basic living conditions in cities.

The positive climatic effects of urban greenery will be crucial in strategies to adapt to climate change, which is projected to intensify or alter specific urban climatic conditions. Urban greenery also makes cities more attractive, helps prevent urban sprawl, and preserves valuable space for biodiversity. Moreover, as in-city services become more efficient, a city's ecological footprint can shrink, thereby mitigating potential negative impacts on biodiversity and the broader environment.

Beyond their essential ecological services, green areas that support biological diversity are increasingly recognised for their contributions to public health and social cohesion. They also offer significant economic benefits, such as an increase in real estate value due to proximity to green spaces. Furthermore, ecologically sustainable urban designs, which often incorporate diverse plant life, can lead to lower maintenance costs through reduced irrigation and fertilisation needs.

Adopting UN Habitat's 3-30-300 Rule 3 trees in view, 30% canopy cover, and parks within 300m enhances ecosystem services, cools cities, and supports wildlife. The development of the City Biodiversity Index, currently being implemented in states like Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, assesses native species, ecosystem services, and governance to help cities create Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (LBSAPs) for conservation and enhanced human well-being. This initiative should be expanded to all major Indian cities in a phased manner.

4.1.3 The Vital Role of Green Spaces in Cities

The presence of green infrastructure, such as parks, gardens, green roofs and walls, and tree-lined streets, significantly impacts urban biodiversity. These ecological areas are crucial for sustaining various ecosystem services, benefiting both wildlife and human populations. To achieve this, urban landscapes need green spaces that are adequately sized, diverse, and well-distributed.

Urban green infrastructure encompasses a range of elements, including recreational

parks, gardens, natural open spaces, wetlands, and even surrounding rural lands. The European Environment Agency (EEA) emphasises that the quality of life for urban residents is closely linked to the availability of these green areas. This is because they offer vital opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and connecting with nature, positively influencing people's emotional and physical well-being.

While the structure of green spaces and biodiversity may differ between rural and urban areas, particularly in places like Europe, the consensus remains: nature profoundly benefits humans. These positive effects include reducing blood pressure, enhancing cognitive abilities, and increasing overall happiness. Beyond human well-being, urban green spaces and their biodiversity play a critical role in environmental regulation. They help filter air pollutants, purify water, reduce noise, and mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, which is particularly important for cities adapting to future climate changes.

4.1.4 Urban Ecological Processes

Urban ecological processes describe the complex interactions and dynamic functions of ecosystems as they exist within urban environments. These processes are shaped by a confluence of factors, including human activities, specific land use patterns, and the existing urban infrastructure. A thorough understanding of these processes is essential for achieving sustainable urban planning and effective city management.

Urbanization itself exerts a profound influence on ecological processes. As cities undergo expansion, there is often a consequence of fragmentation or outright destruction of natural habitats. This directly results in a decline in biodiversity and a disruption of natural ecological processes. Furthermore, urban areas commonly experience significant alterations to their hydrological cycles, an increase in various forms of pollution, and noticeable changes in local microclimates.

These urban ecological processes invasion, succession, concentration, centralization, and segregation are fundamental to understanding how cities change and grow, particularly in terms of their social and spatial organisation.

Invasion and Succession

Both invasion and succession are terms borrowed from biological ecology to describe the process of neighbourhood change and urban growth, where one social group gradually replaces another in a desirable urban area. Invasion specifically refers to the initial influx of a new population, often from rural areas, into city centres or adjacent residential areas seeking employment, education, or other opportunities. This inflow is frequently observed among lower economic status immigrant groups. The "invasion" can sometimes negatively impact the perceived quality of life for existing residents, occasionally prompting higher-status groups to relocate to the city's periphery. The term invasion itself often carries a negative connotation, reflecting the sentiments of established residents towards newcomers.

Succession is a complementary process to invasion, occurring only after an invasion has begun. It describes the subsequent, gradual movement of people outwards in successive phases as needs arise, leading to a complete replacement of the previous inhabitants. This process is not abrupt or uniform but unfolds in stages. Both invasion and succession are frequently linked to the movement of ethnic minority groups into new areas, bringing about characteristic changes in the urban landscape.

Concentration and Centralisation

Concentration is a very evident process in urban society, largely driven by significant rural-urban or even urban-urban migration. This leads to a higher clustering of population within cities, often with a changing demographic composition. While this increased concentration can foster more social interactions, it can also lead to superficial relationships or anonymity and place considerable pressure on existing infrastructure. The rapid increase in urban population density serves as a key indicator of concentration. This tendency extends to the localisation of economic activity within a relatively small number of urban centres, a phenomenon also known as polarisation or agglomeration. This spatial concentration is fuelled by factors like market density, access to information, centralised control and decision-making, interactive linkages, and other external economies. Consequently, concentration and centralisation can disadvantage peripheral locations, contributing to the economic and social deprivation often observed at greater distances from the urban core.

A significant aspect of urban society is ethnic concentration, which is viewed both as a general process of residential differentiation and as an outcome of socio-economic and cultural differences. Studies reveal varying degrees of residential concentration among ethnic groups. Proximity to people of the same ethnic origin offers a vital means of preserving familial cultural values and preferred behaviours. Examples include the concentration of the Bengali population in Chittaranjan Park, the Muslim population in Old Delhi, and Punjabi migrants in Lajpat Nagar, all in Delhi. The physical growth and spatial pattern of cities, such as the historical development of Bombay (now Mumbai) with its British and Indian merchant sections adjoining the harbour and administrative centre, illustrate how spatial concentration and centralisation are intrinsically linked to increasing urban size and hierarchical organisational structures.

Segregation

Segregation is another crucial ecological process for understanding social institutions and groups within urban society. It refers to the increasing division of the urban population into various social groups based on income, social status (including ethnicity and class), and other criteria. This division manifests as spatial isolation and a rearrangement of residential patterns. Residential segregation is a highly observable phenomenon that widens the social distance between different localities. Extensive literature confirms that larger cities frequently exhibit the highest levels of segregation. Thus, a greater disparity in the spatial distributions of groups within an urban area directly correlates with an increased social distance between them.

Segregation is also amplified by the growing acceptance of market-based land and basic services, which tend to price out the poor and marginalised from more affluent areas. This unevenness can be primarily tenurial, reflected in differences in the types of accommodation occupied, which then translates into spatial manifestations. Historically, one traditional motive for segregation has been the desire to control direct person-to-person interactions, leading to more or less welcome message exchanges and influences on behaviour. While de facto segregation might emerge for various reasons, its significance lies in the fact that residential proximity creates a range of positive and negative externalities that people try to optimise, partly through their decisions about where to live.

Urban ecology is a dynamic and increasingly crucial area of study, particularly given the rapid global increase in urbanisation. This growth of urban areas impacts human health and well-being in cities and exacerbates the global biodiversity crisis, largely because converting rural or

natural land into urban spaces diminishes biodiversity. Consequently, as urbanisation accelerates, so does the urgency to address these issues and, in turn, the importance of urban ecology. Currently, urban ecology aims to identify ecological patterns and their related functions and mechanisms within cities. It also promotes urban ecosystem services, nature-based solutions, and urban development that supports biodiversity, ultimately benefiting urban populations.

Urban ecology is both a practical science dealing with the environment of people living in towns and cities, and the associated 'environmental problems' such as water, air and soil pollution, extraction of drinking water, transport planning, noise, etc., and a biological science as well. As a sub-discipline of ecology, urban ecology is concerned with the distribution and abundance of plants and animals in towns and cities.

Recap

- Urban sociology emerged to understand cities' morphology and growth patterns.
- Urban ecology is a subdiscipline focused on human spatial distribution in cities.
- The Chicago School pioneered urban ecology in the 1920s.
- Sociologists borrowed the term "ecology" from botany.
- Human ecology studies the relationship between humans and their environment.
- Urban ecological processes include invasion, succession, concentration, and segregation.
- Invasion describes a new population entering an urban area.
- Succession is the subsequent gradual replacement of inhabitants.
- Concentration refers to population clustering and economic activity localization.
- Segregation is the spatial division of urban populations based on social criteria

Objective Questions

1. Who used the term “human ecology” first?
2. What does urban ecology analyze?
3. What is the initial influx of a new population called?
4. What process follows invasion?
5. What drives concentration in urban areas?
6. What is another term for economic activity localization?
7. What does segregation describe?
8. What does urban ecology promote for cities?
9. What term describes the clustering of population within cities due to migration?
10. What leads to the increasing division of the urban population into social groups based on income, status, etc.?
11. What are examples of green infrastructure in urban landscapes?
12. What do urban green spaces and their biodiversity help filter?

Answers

1. Robert E Park
2. How people spread out
3. Invasion
4. Succession
5. Migration
6. Agglomeration
7. Spatial division

8. Sustainability
9. Concentration
10. Segregation
11. Parks, gardens, green roofs/walls, tree-lined streets
12. Air pollutants

Assignments

1. Briefly explain the main difference between Urban Geography and Urban Ecology.
2. How did the Chicago School apply biological principles to understand urban populations?
3. Describe the process of invasion and succession in an urban context.
4. What are the key factors that lead to the urban heat island effect?
5. Discuss two ways urban development impacts urban hydrology.
6. Why is understanding urban soil features important for city planning?

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UNIT 2

Ecological Theories of Urbanisation

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- describe the core tenets of Burgess's concentric zone theory, including the characteristics of each zone
- explain Homer Hoyt's sector theory, identifying how transportation routes influence urban growth patterns
- discuss the multiple nuclei theory by Harris and Ullman, recognizing the concept of multiple urban centers and their development

Prerequisite

Cities are more than just collections of buildings; they are dynamic, evolving entities with distinct internal arrangements that reflect complex social, economic, and historical forces. While every city possesses unique features, a fascinating reality emerges when we examine their broader geographical structure: a remarkable degree of repetition in how different types of land uses are organised. From the bustling downtown core to the quiet residential neighbourhoods and industrial zones, a discernible pattern often underlies the apparent chaos. This recurring arrangement isn't accidental; it's a testament to the powerful influence of factors such as land values, accessibility to transportation, and the unique historical journey of urban development. Understanding these underlying patterns became a central quest for early urban sociologists and geographers, leading to the development of foundational theories that continue to shape our perception of urban spaces.

In the early 20th century, as cities rapidly expanded and transformed, pioneering urbanists sought to provide a generalised framework for explaining these spatial regularities. Their efforts resulted in classic models – notably the Concentric Zone

Theory by Burgess, the Sector Theory by Hoyt, and the Multiple Nuclei Theory by Harris and Ullman. Although these models were developed decades ago and urban landscapes have changed dramatically since, they remain indispensable tools in urban studies. Even when their direct applicability is debated, engaging with these theories is essential for any student of urban geography and sociology, as they provide the fundamental conceptual vocabulary and analytical lens through which we continue to discuss, dissect, and understand the intricate morphology of the modern city.

Keywords

Urban growth, Zones, Sectors, Nuclei, Suburbs, Multiple centres, Urban regeneration

Discussion

There are unique characteristics that define the specific internal land-use patterns of each city. However, when we look at the broader geographical arrangement of different types of urban land use, a significant degree of repetition can be observed across various cities. Even a superficial examination of urban areas reveals that different parts of a city are typically allocated for distinct land uses. Despite these individual variations, a generalised pattern of land use can be identified in most cities. This pattern largely reflects the influence of controlling factors such as land values, accessibility, and the historical trajectory of urban growth. Based on these recurring patterns of urban land use, several theories have been developed that aim to provide a generalised framework for understanding the arrangement of land-use regions within a city.

Although cities have changed significantly since the models were developed, they are frequently cited in debates on urban morphology, even if only to dismiss their continued relevance. It is true that a large extent of each city possesses a distinctive combination of varying types of land uses, but a common pattern can be traced over time. The models provided by Burgess, Hoyt, Harris, and Ullman are now part of the philosophy of urban geography, and it is essential to discuss them to understand the basic foundations of this field.

The morphological pattern of a city has been discussed through three theoretical explanations. These are:

1. Concentric zone theory by Burgess
2. Sector theory by Hoyt
3. Multiple Nuclei theory by Harris and Ullman

4.2.1 Concentric Zone Theory

The Concentric Zone Model of urban land use, also known as the zonal theory, was developed by American urban sociologist E.W. Burgess in 1925. His concept, first introduced in *The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project* (a chapter in *The City*, co-authored with R.E. Park), was based on his studies of American cities, particularly Chicago. This model is recognised as one of the earliest theoretical frameworks to explain urban social structures

and serves as an early descriptive model of urban land use. It postulates that cities expand outwards from their central area, forming a series of five distinct concentric zones, each characterised by different types of land use. It is also the earliest descriptive urban land-use model that divides cities into a set of concentric circles expanding from the downtown to the suburbs. It is based on the concept that the development of a city occurs outwards from its central area, forming a series of concentric zones. These zones, as identified by Burgess, include:

Zone 1: The Central Business District (CBD)

The Central Business District (CBD), often referred to as "the Loop," forms the innermost and oldest zone of a city, serving as its economic and commercial heart. This area is typically characterised by significant socio-economic prosperity and acts as the primary destination for commuters from all other urban zones.

The CBD is the central hub for the city's essential financial institutions, government offices, and various businesses. It is visually defined by its concentration of high-rise buildings, bustling streets, and intense commercial activity. Due to its unparalleled proximity to critical services, major transport hubs, and significant cultural landmarks, the CBD commands the most expensive land in the entire city. Ultimately, the "Loop" or CBD is the focal point where the city's key financial, civic, retail, and entertainment functions converge, making it the undeniable centre of its social, commercial, and civic life, as well as its primary transportation nexus.

Zone 2: The Zone of Transition

Immediately encircling the Central Business District (CBD) is the Zone of Transition, a dynamic and often volatile area characterised by significant economic and social change. This mixed-use zone contains both residential and commercial properties, serving as a buffer between the expensive city core and more affordable outlying neighbourhoods.

Historically, this zone has been a magnet for immigrants, lower-income families, and individuals who cannot afford the higher costs of living closer to the CBD. Consequently, it often features rundown housing, abandoned buildings, factories, and warehouses. The Zone of Transition is the quintessential setting for urban invasion, where new social groups, frequently with diverse backgrounds, move in and begin to replace previous occupants. This dynamic process, known as succession, sees one group gradually displacing another, driven by economic pressures, evolving land uses, or both. For instance, initial immigrant populations may settle here, but as they achieve greater economic stability, they might move to more established areas, creating space for subsequent waves of newcomers.

This zone is in a constant state of flux. Older private houses are frequently subdivided into smaller dwelling units or converted into offices and light industrial spaces. Its changing character is defined by the encroachment of businesses and light manufacturing into what was once primarily residential, often leading to residential deterioration. The Zone of Transition is predominantly inhabited by poor people and labourers who work in the businesses or light manufacturing within or near the CBD. It is characterised by its old structural houses, the prevalence of rooms available for rent, a low-income population, and narrow, often bustling streets.

Zone 3: The Zone of Workingmen's Houses

This area is largely constituted of neighbourhoods of second-generation immigrant settlement in northern cities. The Zone of Workingmen's Homes constitutes the third concentric circle in Burgess's model,

representing a more stable residential area just beyond the Zone of Transition. This zone is primarily inhabited by industrial workers who have moved out of the deteriorating conditions of the transitional zone but still desire convenient access to their workplaces.

Its key advantage is its proximity to major zones of employment, allowing residents easy commutes to their jobs in the CBD's businesses or light manufacturing industries. While some older residential buildings can be found here, this zone is characterised by its socio-economically stable working-class families. In Chicago, this zone was notably dominated by two-storey buildings where homeowners resided on the lower floor and rented out the upper story. Essentially, it is composed of older residential blocks primarily occupied by stable working-class families who have achieved job security. These residents have typically moved from the Zone of Transition (Zone II) to be closer to their workplaces, seeking an escape from the slums or overcrowded conditions often found in the inner city. It frequently represents the second settlement area for immigrant families, often housing the second generation who have attained greater stability.

Zone 4: The Zone of Better Residences

Further from the CBD, encircling Zone III, lies the Zone of Better Residences, sometimes referred to as the Commuters' Zone. This area represents a concentric space inhabited by more spacious dwellers, offering significantly better housing and higher-quality amenities compared to the inner zones.

This zone is characterised by its larger homes, suburban-style developments, and quiet, often tree-lined streets. High-class apartment buildings and exclusive, "restricted" districts featuring single-family dwellings are present. The residents here are typically white-collar workers, professionals, managers, and clerks, representing middle-income families.

The multi-room dwellings in this zone often possess vast open spaces in front of their houses, commonly used for gardening, reflecting a desire for more private and aesthetically pleasing environments. This zone provides the peaceful and stable environment often sought by the middle class, offering better infrastructure, including well-maintained schools, appealing shopping areas, and dedicated recreational spaces. Due to these improved living conditions, this zone is the typical area of choice for individuals and families who desire to escape the busier, more crowded inner-city areas while still maintaining convenient commuting distances to their workplaces in the city centre.

Zone 5: The Commuter's Zone (30-60 miles from the CBD in large cities)

As the outermost circle beyond the city limits, the Commuter Zone encompasses the suburbs and exurbs farthest from the city centre. This area is characterised by high-class residences developed along rapid travel routes. Residents typically commute daily to the main city for work.

The Commuter Zone offers more affordable land and greater space for larger homes and green areas. Housing is low-density, often consisting of single-family homes, and is associated with a higher standard of living. Open spaces separate the residences, creating a rural, suburbanised setting. While open countryside and former villages may still exist, they are evolving into dormitory settlements for commuters.

Commuting costs are highest in this zone. Historically, most settlements were located near rail stations, reflecting reliance on public transportation. Residents in the Commuter Zone generally have higher incomes and hold professional or managerial positions. These areas appeal to wealthier individuals who prefer to live away from the city's intensity

while maintaining access to its economic and social opportunities.

These zones were assumed to be a product of radial expansion taking place from the CBD of the central city. Burgess also identified two additional zones: Zone 6, which comprises agricultural districts within commuting distance of the CBD, and Zone 7, which includes the hinterland of the city. As a result of growth and expansion, the city must be spatially reorganised, with each inner zone extending its spatial area by encroaching on the next outer zone. It is clear, then, that Burgess conceived his theory as a dynamic one that describes the process of city growth and differentiation over time. He considered radial expansion to be the primary factor, but not the only one, that determines city structure. He noted that topographic features, such as rivers and hills, and transportation arteries introduce distortions into the zonal pattern, so that no city perfectly exemplifies concentric zones. However, Burgess assumes these concentric patterns to be dominant and explicitly discernible, with only minor variations, in all cities in the United States.

The main points of Burgess's model can be summed up as follows:

1. City centre characterized by business activities and light manufacturing which is also zone of employment.

2. Encircling city centres are the zones of different class residences.

3. Poor people prefer to live near their place of work where living conditions are poor.

4. As we move away from the inner city towards the periphery, gradually better class residential dwellings are found.

4.2.1.1 Criticism of Burgess's Concentric Zone Model

While Burgess's Concentric Zone Model provided an early and influential framework for understanding urban structure, it has faced significant criticism from contemporary urban geographers, including M. Alihan, M.R. Davie, Walter Firey, and R.E. Dickinson. These critiques highlight the model's limitations in explaining the complexities of modern and diverse urban landscapes:

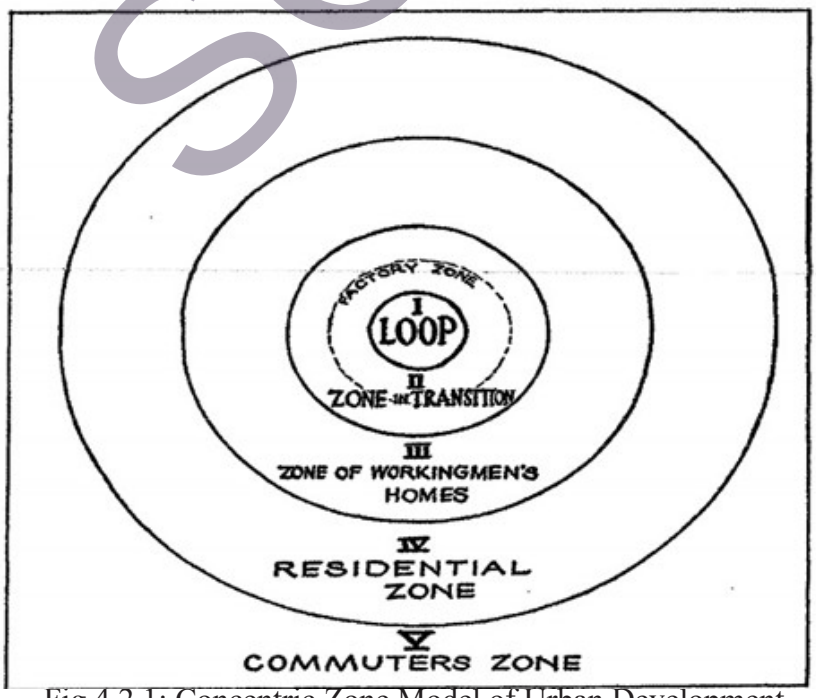

Fig 4.2.1: Concentric Zone Model of Urban Development

1. **Limited Global Applicability:** The model struggles to accurately represent cities outside the United States, especially those that developed under vastly different historical and socio-economic contexts. Its assumptions are primarily rooted in early 20th-century American urban growth patterns.

2. **Outdated for Modern American Cities:** Even within the United States, advancements in transportation (such as the widespread adoption of automobiles), the rise of information technology, and transformations in the global economy have rendered the clear, distinct concentric zones less evident. Urban land use patterns have become more fragmented and complex.

3. **Inverted Socio-Economic Patterns:** The model posits that inner-city areas are poor while suburbs are wealthy, a pattern observed in many American cities. However, this is not universally true; in some countries, the reverse situation is prevalent, with affluent residents preferring central locations and poorer populations residing in peripheral areas.

4. **Assumptions of an Isotropic Plain:** Burgess's model assumes an "isotropic plain"—an even, unchanging landscape without physical barriers or unique attractive features. In reality, physical geography, such as rivers, coastlines, or mountainous terrain, can restrict urban growth in certain directions or make specific locations (e.g., riverfronts or seafronts) highly desirable for residential or commercial purposes, distorting the concentric pattern.

- Decentralisation of Urban Functions: Modern cities frequently exhibit decentralisation, with shops, manufacturing industries, and entertainment venues dispersing to various parts of the city rather than remaining strictly confined to the CBD or specific zones. This leads to the emergence of multiple commercial and activity nodes.

- Impact of Urban Regeneration and Gentrification: Processes like urban regeneration and gentrification directly contradict the model's assumptions about fixed socio-economic zoning. These phenomena can lead to formerly low-income housing areas transforming into much more expensive properties, introducing higher-income residents into areas previously characterised by lower socio-economic status.

- Neglect of Non-Economic Factors: The model does not adequately account for the significant influence of local urban politics, planning policies, and the powerful forces of globalisation, all of which play crucial roles in shaping urban land use and social organisation.

- Inapplicability to Polycentric Cities: The Concentric Zone Model fits poorly with polycentric cities, which have multiple centres of activity and commerce rather than a single, dominant CBD. Many cities, including most in India, are polycentric, rendering Burgess's singular core-based structure less relevant.

4.2.2 The Sector Theory

The Sector Theory of urban land use was proposed by American land economist Homer Hoyt in 1939. His ideas were initially published by the United States Federal Housing Administration in a work titled *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities*. Although M.R. Davie presented similar views concurrently, Hoyt is credited as the originator of the Sector Theory. Hoyt's theory emerged from his detailed factual examination of residential rent patterns across

twenty-five cities in the U.S.A.

Hoyt's Sector Theory aimed to address the limitations of earlier urban models, such as Burgess's Concentric Zone Model, by arguing that cities do not expand in simple concentric rings but rather in sectors His model fundamentally considers the entire city as a circle, with different land use or functional zones originating near the centre and migrating outwards towards the periphery. These distinct land use differences tend to persist as the city grows.

Crucially, Hoyt observed that distinctive sectors of land use are likely to grow outwards from the city centre, often influenced by and focused along major transportation routes. Through an empirical study of American cities, Hoyt specifically noted that high-rent residential areas tend to be located in one or more specific sectors. He created maps illustrating how rent patterns varied by sectors, irrespective of concentric circles, and analysed the impact of transportation on various urban features, including recreational areas. According to Hoyt, the high-class residential area plays a pivotal role as the main instrument in shaping the overall land use structure of the city.

Hoyt's model identifies five primary types of land use zones within cities:

1. CBD (Central Business District)
2. Wholesale and Light Industry Zone
3. Low-Class Residential Zone
4. Medium-Class Residential Zone
5. High-Class Residential Zone

1. CBD – Central Business District

Positioned at the city's core, the Central Business District (CBD) serves as the nucleus from which various land uses and activities originate. Often referred to as "downtown," this area is characterised by its high-rise buildings. The inner city or downtown area often embodies multiple layers of historical growth across generations, reflecting the cultural and traditional influences of its inhabitants. As cities expand and modern technological and scientific innovations reshape lifestyles and urban structures, open spaces have increasingly been replaced by built forms, leading to a more congested and potentially unhealthy environment.

2. Industry Zone

Industrial areas are represented as a sector radiating outwards from the city centre. These sectors develop due to the presence of key transport linkages, such as railway lines, rivers, or major roads, which attract and facilitate industrial activities, leading to the formation of continuous industrial corridors or "sectors."

3. Low-Class Residential Area

This zone is inhabited by low-income groups and is characterised by narrow roads, high population density, and small houses with often inadequate ventilation. The roads in this area frequently connect directly to industrial zones, where a majority of the residents work. This proximity to industries reduces travel costs, making it an attractive location for industrial workers. However, environmental and living conditions are often compromised due to the close vicinity of factories.

4. Middle-Class Residential Area

This zone accommodates middle-income groups who can afford greater travel costs in exchange for better living conditions. The residents in this area are engaged in diverse occupations, not solely industrial work. This

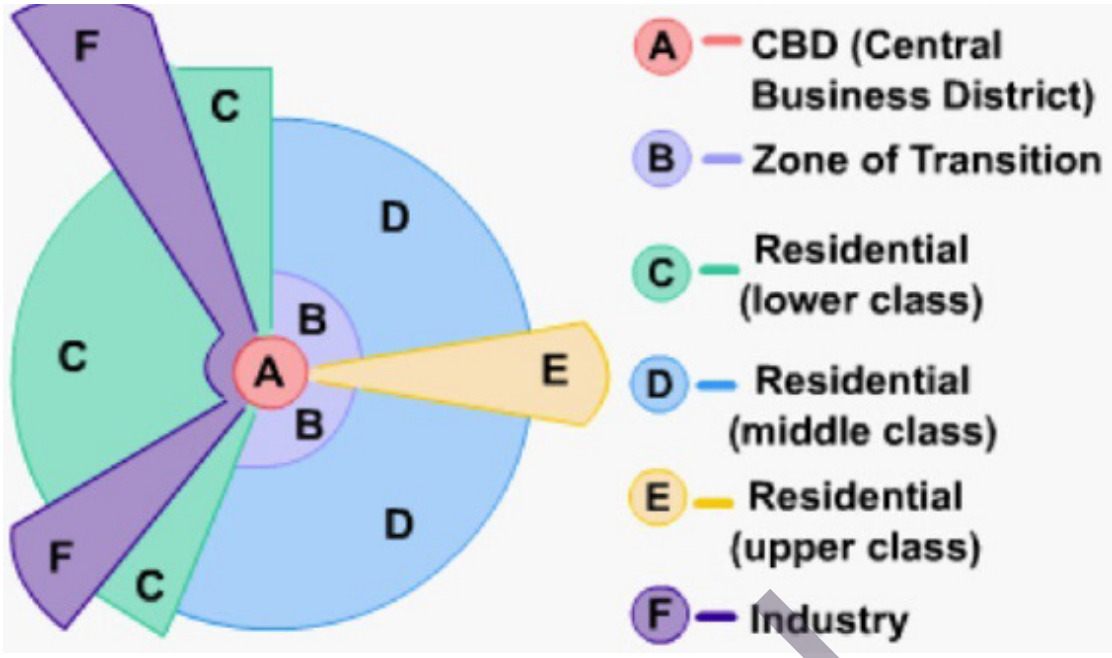

Fig. 4.2.2 Sector Model

Source: https://www.townandcountryplanninginfo.com/2020/08/sector-theory

zone maintains stronger linkages with the CBD while also having some connections to industrial areas. It typically represents the largest residential area in the city.

5. High-Class Residential Area

This is the outermost zone, situated farthest from the downtown (CBD). It is home to wealthy and affluent individuals. This area is noted for its cleanliness, lower traffic density, and quiet environment, featuring large houses. A distinct corridor or "spine" of the best housing often extends from the CBD towards the city's edge.

4.2.2.1 Features of the Sector Model

- The model highlights the common occurrence of low-income groups residing in close proximity to industrial zones, which supports Hoyt's premise.
- Hoyt's model acknowledges that advancements in transportation, particularly, and improved access to resources disrupted the concentric patterns proposed by Burgess.
- Transportation linkages profoundly influence the location of activities, as low transportation costs and proximity to roads or railways reduce production expenses.
- The model accounts for major transportation routes and their direct effect on the distribution of urban activities.

4.2.2.2 Limitations of the Sector Model

- The model primarily considers railway lines as drivers for sector growth and does not adequately account for the impact of private vehicles (automobiles) on urban development.
- It presents a monocentric view of cities, failing to account for the presence of multiple business centres, which characterise many modern cities, including most in India.

- Physical geographical features (e.g., rivers, hills) may restrict or direct urban growth along specific wedges, which the generalised model may not fully capture.

- The model makes no explicit reference to out-of-town or peripheral developments that occur independently of the central city's expansion.

4.2.3 The Multiple Nuclei Theory

The Multiple-Nuclei Model, proposed by Chauncy Harris and Edward Ullman in 1945, represents the third significant ideal model developed in the first half of the 20th century to describe urban land-use patterns. Unlike the monocentric models of Burgess and Hoyt, Harris and Ullman's core argument is that the modern American metropolis is characterised by a network of diverse "nodes" or "nuclei" situated outside the central city. This nodal configuration arises from two opposing forces: the mutual attraction between certain activities, leading them to cluster together, and the advantages gained by other activities from being physically separated. This interplay of attraction and repulsion shapes urban land use, fostering the development of non-central nuclei around key urban elements such as universities, factories, retail centres, and leisure facilities.

The model's enduring relevance in scholarly understanding of metropolitan areas stems from its internal consistency, the simplicity of its argument, and its comprehensive coverage of various urban land uses. Its continued use is also reinforced by the powerful visual image of multiple nuclei scattered across a modern metropolis. However, the model does face significant criticisms, particularly regarding its schematic presentation, its reductionist economic explanation, and its limited applicability to urban settings outside mid-20th-century America.

Harris and Ullman posit that cities do not grow around a single central point but instead develop with multiple centres or "nuclei," which emerge based on the specific activities, industries, and social groups they accommodate. This implies that cities are not structurally homogeneous; rather, they comprise distinct areas that develop independently, each possessing its unique functions, social dynamics, and urban patterns.

4.2.3.1 Key Principles of the Multiple-Nuclei Model

The Multiple-Nuclei Model provides a detailed understanding of complex urban growth through several core principles:

1. Cities Have Multiple Centres: Unlike earlier models that suggested concentric or sectoral growth from a single central point, this model emphasises the presence of several urban centres or "nuclei." These can be economic hubs, cultural districts, or residential areas, each with a distinct character and function. For example, a large city might feature a business district, a residential area, and an industrial zone, each acting as a distinct nucleus actively shaping the surrounding urban growth.

2. Independent Growth of Specialised Zones: Different urban functions, such as commerce, industry, and residence, form specialised zones that grow independently. This growth is influenced by factors like geography, infrastructure, and social needs. An industrial zone, for instance, might develop near transport routes, while high-end residential areas might emerge near cultural or leisure hubs. These specialised zones interact dynamically, creating a complex mix of social and economic activities.

3. Non-Homogeneous Urban Growth:

A significant aspect of this model is its rejection of the notion of uniform, predictable urban growth. Instead, cities are viewed as heterogeneous environments where diverse activities and social groups coexist in distinct but overlapping areas. This non-homogeneous nature allows for a wide variety of spatial arrangements, including residential neighbourhoods adjacent to industrial zones or shopping malls near office buildings, illustrating the complex and sometimes contradictory evolution of cities.

4. Influence of Physical and Social Factors: The development of these nuclei is shaped by both physical and social factors. Geographical features like rivers or mountains often dictate the location of specific centres (e.g., a city developing around a coastal port). Social factors, including class, ethnicity, and income, also play a crucial role in forming specialised zones. For example, affluent neighbourhoods may emerge in certain areas, while marginalised communities settle in others, contributing to the diverse and multifaceted nature of urban environments.

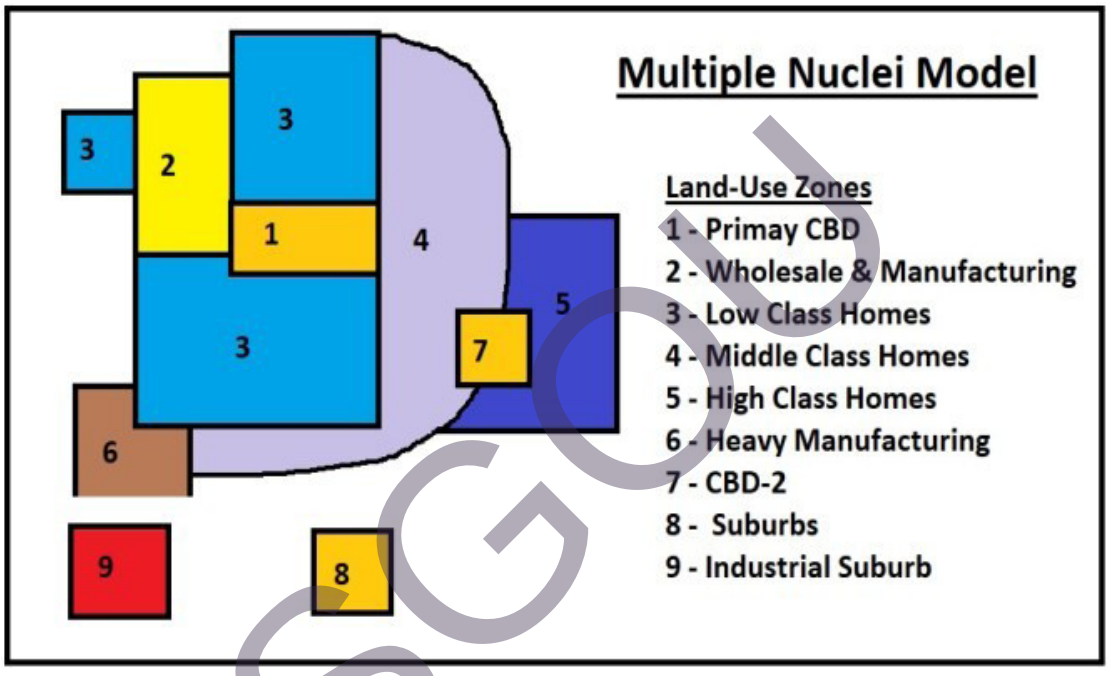

Fig. 4.2.3 Multiple Nuclei Model

Source: https://pangeography.com/multiple-nuclei-model-by-harris-and-ullman

4.2.3.2 Zones in the Multiple-Nuclei Model

The model identifies specific types of zones within the urban landscape:

1. **Central Business District (CBD):** This remains the primary centre for high-end commercial activities, characterised by high land rent, intensive land use, large business offices, and administrative buildings. It has negligible residential areas and serves as the convergence point for all transport networks.

2. **Wholesale & Manufacturing Zone:** Located in proximity to the CBD, this sector depends on the CBD for services like commercial permits, financial services, and transport. In return, it provides interest and investment

opportunities to the CBD.

3. **Low-Class Homes:** This crowded area is inhabited by low-income, blue-collar workers. Residential conditions are typically poor, with narrow roads often connecting directly to industries where most residents work, minimising commute costs. Environmental and living conditions can be inadequate due to proximity to factories. These workers provide services to various economic sectors, including wholesale, heavy manufacturing, and services to the middle class.

4. **Middle-Class Homes:** This zone features better residential properties, primarily occupied by white-collar workers with good incomes who can afford housing here. Properties are often detached, and the zone is characterised by open spaces like parks, gardens, and affluent markets.

5. **High-Class Homes:** This outermost zone contains large villas and bungalows of the affluent class, typically in suburban areas. It boasts open spaces, large gardens, and golf courses. While farthest from the city centre, residents are able to commute to the CBD. Over time, some CBD activities, such as large corporate offices and business functions, may relocate to suburbs, leading high-class residents to shift their workplaces to these new suburban CBDs to avoid long commutes.

6. **Heavy Manufacturing:** As cities expand horizontally, some heavy industries may fall within city limits. Due to the pollution they cause, these industries are often relocated by urban administration to the periphery, frequently surrounding the low-class residential areas (Zone 3).

7. **Central Business District-2 (Suburban CBDs):** Over time, a decentralisation of CBD activities occurs, with some functions relocating to the suburbs. These new suburban centres can be termed CBD-2. For instance, while Connaught Place is a primary CBD in Delhi, Nehru Place also functions as a specialised CBD. The emergence of new CBDs is driven by the old CBD becoming overly crowded and land rents becoming exorbitant, prompting corporate houses to move to suburban locations for a better environment for their employees.

8. **Suburbs:** The entire city is enveloped by a suburban zone, which presents a mix of rural and urban land uses. This zone includes smaller towns that act as local CBDs, providing marketing services to the suburban area. Municipal corporations often relocate undesirable urban land uses, such as garbage landfill sites, illegal farmhouses, godowns, and even criminal activities, to the suburbs. This area also serves as a crucial source of fresh produce like milk and vegetables for the city centre.

9. **Industrial Suburb:** With continued urban growth, polluting industries are frequently relocated to suburban areas by municipal authorities. These new suburban industrial zones can also serve as new CBDs where workers from the surrounding suburban areas seek employment.

Recap

- Urban land use patterns show both unique characteristics and significant repetition across cities
- Burgess's Concentric Zone Theory posits that cities expand outwards in a series of five distinct rings
- The Central Business District (CBD) is the innermost zone, the economic and commercial heart of the city
- The Zone of Transition is a dynamic area of change, often characterized by rundown housing and new immigrant populations
- The Zone of Workingmen's Homes houses stable working-class families seeking proximity to their jobs
- Hoyt's Sector Theory argues that cities grow in "sectors" radiating outwards, often along transportation routes
- Hoyt observed that high-rent residential areas tend to be located in specific sectors
- The Multiple Nuclei Theory suggests that cities develop with multiple centers or nuclei
- Harris and Ullman's model highlights the clustering and separation of different urban activities.

Objective Questions

1. Who developed the Concentric Zone Theory?
2. What is the innermost zone in Burgess's model?
3. Which zone often contains rundown housing and immigrants?
4. Who proposed the Sector Theory?
5. What significantly influences sector growth in Hoyt's model?
6. Who developed the Multiple Nuclei Theory?
7. How many central points does the Multiple Nuclei Theory propose?

8. What drives the emergence of new CBDs in the Multiple Nuclei model?
9. What is the primary factor driving land values in the CBD?
10. What term describes one social group replacing another in a zone?
11. Which class of workers typically inhabits the Zone of Better Residences?
12. What are examples of physical barriers that can distort concentric patterns?

Answers

1. Burgess
2. CBD
3. Transition
4. Hoyt
5. Transportation
6. Harris and Ullman
7. Multiple
8. Decentralization
9. Proximity/Accessibility
10. Succession
11. White-collar
12. Rivers/Hills

Assignments

1. Discuss the features of Concentric Zone theory and its criticisms.

2. How do the socio-economic characteristics of Burgess's "Zone of Transition" compare and contrast with Hoyt's "Low-Class Residential Zone," and what similarities and differences can be observed in their descriptions and proposed causes?

3. Explain the main difference between Hoyt's Sector Theory and Multiple nuclei theory.

4. What is the core idea of the Multiple Nuclei Theory? Name two examples of "nuclei" (centers) you might find in a large city, other than the main CBD.

5. The text mentions criticisms of Burgess's model, including "Limited Global Applicability" and "Outdated for Modern American Cities." Choose one of these criticisms and explain why it makes the model less useful for understanding cities today, especially in countries like India.

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BLOCK

Implications of Urbanization

UNIT

Urban Housing, Slums and Gentrification

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- comprehend the major problems found in Indian urban centres.
- explain types, dimensions and causes of housing problem and slums in India.
- assess the formation, growth and impact of gentrification, ethnic enclave and gated communities on the urban communities

Prerequisite

Imagine walking through a bustling city - skyscrapers stretching into the sky, glass-fronted malls buzzing with shoppers, and leafy boulevards lined with cafes. Yet, just a few streets away, you might find cramped lanes, overcrowded homes, and crumbling infrastructure. This contrast is at the heart of our discussion on urban problems related to housing, slums, and gentrification. Cities are engines of opportunity, but they also face deep challenges in providing safe, affordable, and dignified living spaces for all residents. In this unit, we'll explore why housing shortages persist, why slums emerge and expand, and how certain urban changes meant to "improve" neighbourhoods can sometimes push vulnerable communities out instead.

We'll take a journey through real-world examples, historical trends, and sociological insights to understand these issues not just as statistics, but as lived realities. Why do some people end up in informal settlements despite working full-time? How can urban renewal projects that promise progress sometimes widen social divides? And most importantly, what solutions might create cities that are both

vibrant and inclusive? By the end of this unit, you'll see how housing, slums, and gentrification are intertwined, and you'll be equipped to critically engage with urban policies, community initiatives, and the forces shaping our cityscapes today.

Keywords

Homelessness, Urban decline, Ethnic enclave, Gated community

Discussion

Urban areas are the places where the world's demographic, environmental, and social challenges are most clearly visible. Modernization theory suggests that as poorer societies industrialize and subsequently urbanize, increased productivity will raise living standards and help reduce poverty. Historically, cities have contributed more to improving people's quality of life than any other type of settlement. However, contemporary cities face significant challenges in accommodating the growing influx of migrants. Many of these newcomers are rural poor seeking work in either the formal or informal sectors. Once they move to cities in search of jobs or better opportunities, they rarely return to their villages.

This steady movement towards cities has led to persistent urban concentration, which in turn generates numerous problems due to the heavy population density within limited spaces. Issues such as urban poverty, inadequate housing, the growth of slums, scarcity of drinking water, poor drainage, traffic congestion, transport inefficiencies, electricity shortages, environmental pollution, and social problems like various forms of crime have become pressing concerns. These challenges have drawn the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, geographers, and urban planners. While some view these problems as a direct result of the intolerable living conditions in urban environments, others argue that urbanization is inherently tied to modern development, and therefore such problems are an unavoidable cost of progress.

5.1.1. Housing and Slums

As urbanization accelerates in India, the country's housing shortage has reached 18.78 million units, according to the Technical Group TG-12 on Urban Housing Shortage (2012-2017) from the National Building Organization. Data from the Planning Commission of India shows a steady increase in urban housing shortages, from 5 million units in 1982 to 24.7 million in 2007. However, Technical Group 12 (MoHUPA) reported a decrease in housing shortages to 18.78 million in 2012, primarily due to revisions in the estimation methods over time. The 2018 housing shortage was estimated by including inadequately housed households, encompassing non-slum households in substandard housing, slum households, and the homeless. For most households, housing represents their most significant asset. Recognizing housing's critical role, the New Urban Agenda emphasizes the need for adequate and affordable housing within the framework of the Sustainable

Development Goals, specifically Goal 1, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, and Goal 11, which seeks to ensure access to adequate housing, basic services, and slum upgrades

The housing patterns in urban India, especially in the four major metropolitan cities—Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, and Chennai—show notable variations. In Mumbai, 34% of households lived in semi-pucca houses and 3% in kutcha houses. Chennai followed closely, with 33% in semi-pucca and 9% in kutcha dwellings. In contrast, Delhi recorded only 11% of households in semi-pucca houses and less than 1% in kutcha houses. Kolkata presented the most favorable situation, with just 5% semi-pucca houses and almost no kutcha housing. This comparison suggests that Mumbai and Chennai face poorer housing conditions than Kolkata and Delhi.

However, overcrowding remains a major concern in all these cities. In Mumbai, 56% of the population lives with more than three persons per room, followed by 43% in Kolkata, 30% in Chennai, and one-fourth of the population in Delhi. The problem becomes even more severe for those with five or more persons per room—28% of Mumbai's population, 17% in Kolkata, and around 10% in both Delhi and Chennai endure such conditions.

Urban shelterlessness, especially in the context of poverty and illiteracy, manifests most visibly in slums, shanty towns, shack settlements, and squatter colonies. A slum refers to an area of substandard housing, representing a lack of adequate shelter for the poor. Slums often arise due to economic hardship, where low-income individuals cannot afford decent housing and settle for whatever shelter is available. Many migrants, particularly the poor, occupy vacant land and build makeshift homes, as their living situation is still better than what they experienced in their rural origins. Yet, inadequate income is not the only factor; cultural habits and social attitudes toward cleanliness also play a role. People accustomed to unhygienic surroundings may live amid garbage, stagnant water, and unpleasant odors. Without proper care and maintenance, almost any residential area can deteriorate into a slum. The Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act of 1956 defined slum as 'any area that the buildings in that area are: (a) in any respect unfit for human habitation; or (b) by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design of such buildings, narrowness and faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals. The Slums Areas Act echoes the definition of slum as articulated in the Census of India, 2011. According to Census 2001, 27.8 per cent of the total population lived in urban areas, which figure rose to 31 per cent in 2011. In 2001, 52.4 million people lived in slums in India and this increased to 65.5 million by 2011. These numbers constituted 17.4 per cent of the total urban population of the states and union territories in India in 2011

When people grow accustomed to a socially unacceptable standard of living, their situation tends to remain unchanged—even if their income rises. Without an inner motivation to improve, substandard housing conditions persist. In India, slums lack decent living environments, with most dwellings being temporary structures made from materials like tin sheets, rags, or any inexpensive and readily available items. These shelters are typically occupied by lower-income groups and often lack basic facilities such as lavatories and water taps.

Many slums, especially in Mumbai, are located along roadsides, obstructing traffic and pedestrian movement. Their flimsy

constructions are vulnerable to collapse during the monsoon. The harsh living conditions in the "*katras*" of Delhi, "*bustees*" of Kolkata, *"zopadpattis*" of Mumbai, and *"cheris"* of Chennai are well documented by urban studies. Slums are generally characterized by poor sanitation, and overcrowding is not just a matter of small living space—it also creates severe health risks.

Slum areas record higher rates of illness, disease, and infant mortality compared to non-slum areas. Residents often live under constant fear—of floods, storms, fires, or forced eviction—and tend to regard outsiders with suspicion. Educational opportunities are minimal, and slum environments are frequently linked to various forms of social deviation. Studies conducted in different cities over time have highlighted the prevalence of alcoholism, crime, juvenile delinquency, and other urban pathologies within these settlements.

The Government of India's *Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act* of 1954 defines a slum as any predominantly residential area where lighting, sanitation, or a combination of such factors are inadequate and pose a risk to safety, health, or morals. The National Sample Survey (NSS) further describes a slum as a compact settlement of poorly built tenements—mostly temporary in nature—crowded together under unhygienic conditions, often lacking adequate sanitation and drinking water facilities. Areas with at least 20 households meeting these conditions are considered *Non-Notified Slums*. *Notified Slums* are those officially designated as such by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) or development authorities.

A significant portion of rural-to-urban migrants belong to the working class, making it difficult for them to find affordable housing. As a result, they occupy any available open space near their workplaces and construct makeshift huts from inexpensive, temporary materials. Over time, this leads to the proliferation of slums, both in terms of their number and population.

Census data from 1991, showing slum population by town size, indicates that 41% of India's total slum population lived in cities with populations exceeding one million, even though such cities accounted for only 27% of the nation's total population. In contrast, cities with populations between 0.5 and 1 million housed just 9% of the slum population, despite containing 20% of the total population. Similarly, towns with populations between 0.3 and 0.5 million had only 6% of the slum population, while accommodating 19% of the overall population. This pattern suggests that slum concentration is significantly higher in million-plus cities, reflecting the greater economic opportunities they offer compared to medium-sized cities.

5.1.1.1 Dimensions of the Housing Problem

a. Un-Planned Growth of Settle ments

No doubt, the housing issue in India is daunting, not just because of the sheer number of households/units involved but also because of India's complexity, with urban areas ranging in size from over 15 million to a few thousand people, differing geographies of various states and their varying economic levels, as well as local settlement history and house-building practices, all of which point to the limitation of 'one size-fits all' policy solutions. In many metropolitan areas, clusters of housing have sprung up rapidly and without planning, lacking proper layouts, utility services, and other essential amenities. These unauthorized settlements often encroach upon land owned by government agencies, public or private institutions, or spaces designated as green belts. Removing or relocating these densely populated and unsanitary clusters poses a

significant challenge, particularly as they represent large vote banks, making the task complex in a democratic system. To address these irregularities and promote planned urban growth, a large-scale, coordinated effort is required, combining strong administrative measures with skillful political management to safeguard the interests of future generations.

b. Non-Availability of Land

There is a shortage of developed and serviced land available at affordable prices, particularly for the most disadvantaged sections of society. Many of these marginalized groups currently reside in slum clusters situated in high-value areas close to the central business districts of major metropolitan centers. These parcels of land, covered with makeshift dwellings, not only lack proper facilities and appear unsightly, but also represent a grossly inefficient use of valuable urban land. One major reason for this is the absence of well coordinated and effective master planning and its enforcement to guide long-term city growth, with designated zones for industries, commerce, education, healthcare, housing, green spaces, and other essential sectors, all supported by proper infrastructure and transport systems. Addressing this issue requires the regular preparation and updating of Development Plans, Master Plans, Zonal Plans, and Local Area Plans, ensuring that adequate provisions are made for both the homeless and existing slum residents.

When a city expands beyond sustainable limits, its services become overstretched. Urban planners should therefore set clear standards for managing urban sprawl and developing satellite towns. It is equally important to curb the proliferation of unauthorized colonies, new slums, illegal constructions, unapproved property extensions, and the unregulated commercialization of residential neighborhoods.

c. The Problems of Homeless ness

Homelessness is a complex issue, and the circumstances of those affected can vary widely. While it often results from a shortage of housing, there are also other contributing factors. Four primary causes are commonly identified, the first of which is the lack of adequate housing. When there are not enough homes available, some individuals inevitably go without shelter, and it is usually the poorest that are excluded. People in such situations become homeless either because they are denied access to housing or because they lack the financial means to secure alternative accommodation. A key driver of homelessness is the unavailability of sufficient housing units. When housing supply is limited, the poorest sections of society are often left out. Without access to affordable housing or the resources to find other options, homelessness becomes an unavoidable reality.

d. Crowded Conditions

Another significant factor is overcrowding in urban areas. Many cities have extremely high population densities, forcing property owners to rent out multiple rooms to migrants. Urbanization in India gained momentum after independence with the adoption of a mixed economic model, which encouraged the growth of the private sector. Since then, the pace of urbanization has steadily increased. In 1901, only 11.4 percent of India's population lived in urban areas. This proportion rose to 28.53 percent by the 2001 Census and crossed the 30 percent mark in 2011, reaching 31.16 percent. According to the United Nations *State of the World Population* report (2007), about 40.76 percent of India's population is projected to reside in urban areas by 2030. The World Bank further notes that India, along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria, and the United States, is expected to be among the leading contributors to global urban population growth by 2050.

Poor migrants, lacking access to ancestral land, are often dependent on rented accommodation, which they share with many others to reduce expenses. Overcrowding also affects low-income members of the original population. This happens for two main reasons: first, growing families split into multiple households while land prices make new construction unaffordable, forcing more people into the same living space or prompting the subdivision of existing homes. Second, some households rent out parts of their homes to generate additional income.

Fig 5.1.1. Crowded Urban Centres in India

In some cases, a single room may be home to five or six individuals. Such extreme crowding leads to a range of problems, including the spread of diseases, mental health issues, alcoholism, riots, and deviant behavior. Overcrowded urban living also fosters social indifference, where residents are reluctant to intervene in others' problems, even in emergencies such as accidents, assaults, molestation, abductions, or murders. This apathy is a troubling byproduct of dense city life.

e. Size of the Problem

With the continued growth of India's population and the steady migration from rural to urban areas, the housing problem has become increasingly challenging in both scale and nature. Housing shortages in India involve both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Over the years, the situation has worsened due to three main factors: rapid population growth, accelerated urbanization, and a proportionately inadequate increase in housing supply. The issues differ between urban and rural contexts—urban areas struggle primarily with congestion, slums, and squatter settlements, while rural areas face a lack of basic services and poor environmental conditions. Any effective national housing strategy must therefore address the needs of both sectors.

The urban housing crisis in India stems from a substantial disparity between the demand for housing in cities and the availability of suitable options, both in terms of quantity and quality.

High Population Density: The significant migration from rural areas to million-plus

cities has resulted in a severe shortage of housing space due to the escalating population density.

Sub-Optimal Utilization of Urban Land: Urban land is often not utilized to its full potential due to fragmented and poorly recorded ownership, with multiple public sector organizations holding land under their jurisdictions. Additionally, restrictions on Floor Space Index/Floor Area Ratio artificially limit land availability, thereby driving up prices.

Rent Control Regime: Stringent rental laws, which reduce returns on rental properties and make tenant eviction challenging, have discouraged new investments in rental housing. This stagnation in investment has contributed to a shortage of affordable housing in urban areas.

Inadequate Housing Finance: Insufficient housing credit for Low-Income Groups (LIG) is a result of their weak creditworthiness and low disposable incomes. The informal nature of employment in the urbanizing Indian landscape has failed to provide social security or formal credit to the growing urban population, exacerbating the housing crisis.

Since Independence, India has undergone significant changes. Policies promoting employment and improving healthcare have resulted in more people enjoying higher disposable incomes and living longer than previous generations. These developments have contributed to a growing number of households requiring housing, along with rising expectations for better living standards. Consequently, housing policy in India has focused on expanding housing construction and encouraging home ownership. However, while living conditions have improved for many, deep-rooted social and economic inequalities in housing access remain largely unchanged.

f. Housing Finance

Housing finance is a key factor in enabling house construction and related building activities. In this sector, the public sector plays only a limited but supportive role, while the majority of housing investment is expected to come from the private sector. In recent years, several specialized agencies have emerged to facilitate housing finance. However, most funding still comes from a select group of central financial institutions, including the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), and the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation. Additionally, resources are provided and routed through state-level apex cooperative housing societies, State Housing Boards, housing and urban development authorities, and nationalized commercial banks.

5.1.2. Slums: Definition, Growth and Problems

Slums have increasingly come to be recognized as an unavoidable reality, a phenomenon that inevitably accompanies urban expansion in capitalist societies. Urbanization poses several socio-economic and environmental problems for cities and one among them is the rise of slums . Whether in developed or developing nations, most major cities contain slum settlements. These areas represent the most visible form of urban shelterlessness, where people struggle to secure housing under harsh conditions of poverty and illiteracy. Slums, along with shanty towns, shack settlements, and squatter colonies, are essentially concentrations of substandard housing, making the slum issue fundamentally a problem of providing adequate shelter for the poor.

UNESCO defines a slum as a building or group of buildings characterized by overcrowding, physical deterioration, unsanitary conditions, or the absence of essential facilities - factors that threaten the health, safety, or morals of residents and the wider community. Berger adds that slums are defined as areas with substandard housing; a single dilapidated building, no matter how run-down, does not constitute a slum.

A Slum, for Census, has been defined as residential areas where dwellings are unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of the street, lack of ventilation, light, or sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to the safety and health. (Census of India, 2011)

Slums are often described as areas of poverty and deprivation. Their growth has been closely tied to industrialization, as large factories emerged alongside railroads and other forms of mechanized transport, attracting workers from rural areas to cities. As Lewis Mumford observed, the factory, the railroad, and the slum became defining features of the industrial city.

The development of slums is shaped by both economic conditions and social behaviors. Poverty remains a primary driver, as those with low incomes cannot afford quality housing and instead settle for whatever shelter they can obtain. Many poor migrants view slum life as tolerable compared to the harsher circumstances in their rural origins. Often, they occupy vacant land and build makeshift homes, creating settlements that expand over time.

Inadequate income is not the sole reason for the existence of slums; cultural habits and attitudes toward cleanliness also play a role. Some residents are accustomed to living amid dirt, garbage, foul odors, and stagnant water, showing little concern for maintaining their surroundings. Any neighborhood can deteriorate into a slum if its inhabitants neglect basic upkeep. Once people grow accustomed to an unacceptable standard of living, the situation tends to persist, even if their incomes increase. Without an inner drive for improvement, substandard housing conditions remain unchanged.

5.1.2.1 Slums in India

Slums in India generally lack basic amenities and decent living conditions. Most structures are temporary, built from materials like tin sheets, rags, or whatever is cheaply available. Such dwellings are typically occupied by lower-income groups and often have no access to lavatories or water taps. In Mumbai, many slums are located directly on roadsides, obstructing traffic and pedestrian movement. These makeshift structures are unstable and frequently collapse during the rainy season. The deplorable conditions in the "katras" of Delhi, the "bustees" of Kolkata, the "zopadpattis" of Mumbai, and the "cheris" of Chennai are well documented in urban studies.

Sanitation in slums is generally poor, and severe overcrowding not only reduces per capita living space but also poses serious health risks. Slum areas consistently record higher rates of illness, disease, and infant mortality than non-slum areas. Residents often live under constant fear—whether from floods, storms, fires, or forced eviction—and tend to be suspicious of outsiders. Educational opportunities are minimal, and slums are often associated with social problems such as alcoholism, crime, juvenile delinquency, and other urban pathologies, as revealed by numerous studies.

The spread of slums continues at a rapid pace, much like the silent spread of white ants. Across the world, they have increasingly

become centers of unrest and potential rebellion. In Mumbai, too, the expanding ring of slums surrounding the city is evolving into a restless and volatile zone.

5.1.2.2 Types of Slums

Bergel classifies slums into three main types. The first is the *original slum*, which refers to areas that were poorly built from the start. These neighborhoods are beyond repair and must be demolished. The second is the *converted slum*, which consists of houses originally built according to acceptable standards but later vacated by their original residents and occupied by lower-income groups. Lacking resources for proper maintenance, the new occupants allow the buildings to deteriorate—for example, in central Mumbai, former bungalows or large apartments have been divided into one-room chawls with shared toilet facilities. The third category is the *slum developed due to transition*. In such areas, once deterioration begins, both physical and social decline spread quickly. These slums often feature semi-permanent structures, temporary lodging for the destitute, cheap entertainment venues, and dwellings for transients, tramps, chronic alcoholics, beggars, the homeless, and habitual criminals. Unlike original slums, these areas require rehabilitation rather than demolition.

For Census of India-2011, Slums have been categorized and defined as of the following three types:

g. Notified Slums,

h. Recognized Slums, and

i. Identified Slums

a. Notified Slum: All notified areas in a town or city which have been notified as 'Slum' by the State, UT Administration or Local Government, Housing and Slum Boards, etc. under any Statute, including the 'Slum Act,' shall be considered as Notified Slum.

b. Recognized Slum: All areas recognized as 'Slum' by the State / Local Government, UT Administration, Housing and Slum Boards, etc., which may not have been formally notified as slums under any statute, are classified as Recognized Slum.

c. Identified Slums: A congested area of at least 300 populations or about60-70 households with poorly built congested sites, in an unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and a lack of proper sanitation and drinking.

In Mumbai, slums are generally divided into three types. The first type consists of single- or multi-storeyed buildings constructed long ago under the standards of the time but now in poor condition. The second type includes semi-permanent structures, both authorized and unauthorized. Some of these, made from corrugated iron sheets, are known locally as "patra chawls." The third type is the hutment or squatter colony, locally called *zopadpattis*, made from assorted materials such as hardboard, zinc sheets, flattened tin containers, gunny bags, plastic, and mud. These colonies often emerge in open spaces on the outskirts of the city. Life in such settlements is extremely disorganized, with many residents involved in illegal activities.

Slums vary significantly in their physical form. Some are *rooming house slums* (chawls), others are *tenement slums*, and still others are *single-family home slums*. Their condition also varies - some lack basic facilities like bathrooms, toilets, running

water, kitchens, or drainage systems, which could be added to improve living conditions. Others are structurally unsound and should never have been built. A few are well-constructed but suffer from neglect and could be rehabilitated. Severely overcrowded slums may be improved by relocating some residents, while people living in entirely unsuitable areas should be moved elsewhere.

In many Indian cities, slums are often situated along roadsides, on irregular plots, or near gutters and stagnant ponds where dirty water collects. Migrants, driven by the urgent need for shelter, frequently build temporary homes on any available land - whether privately or publicly owned- because their low incomes prevent them from affording proper housing. These locations create multiple challenges for both residents and city authorities.

One major issue is the problem of movement. The huts are built very close together, leaving no proper pathways for walking. The irregularity of the land further complicates safe movement, even for residents themselves. The cramped arrangement blocks sunlight and fresh air, while the narrow, uneven, and zigzag pathways make it difficult to reach the houses.

Slums also pose serious health hazards. Without proper drainage, wastewater accumulates, creating breeding grounds for disease-causing germs. Piles of garbage near homes worsen the problem, spreading foul smells and attracting pests. Another concern is living with animals, as many residents keep cows, goats, and other livestock within the settlement, creating additional nuisance and hygiene issues.

The absence of basic amenities is a defining feature of these settlements. Many lack tap water, electricity, sanitation, drainage systems, or separate kitchens and toilets. As a result, residents are forced to live in unhygienic and unsafe conditions. Poverty further compounds the problem- many couples work long hours, leaving small children to play in the dirt or on the streets. The overall environment reflects a lack of resources and opportunities for housing improvement.

Fig 5.1.2. Dharavi, the largest slum, Mumbai

A critical consequence of slum life is the absence of education. Most residents are uneducated and rely on unskilled labor for survival. Their low earnings not only limit their present living standards but also hinder access to education for their children, perpetuating illiteracy across generations.

Many unauthorized slum dwellers face a constant threat of eviction from municipal authorities such as the BMC. This insecurity prevents them from living peacefully, and they are often denied compensation in case of displacement. Finally, slums are frequently described as areas of disorganization, with some residents engaged in illegal activities, contributing to social problems such as alcoholism, violence, and crime.

5.1.2.3 Causes of Growth of Slums

Slum is the byproduct of urbanization. One of the major causes of slum growth is the absence of affordable housing for low-income groups. Most of the urban centers in India have witnessed enormous growth particularly in terms of population. The level of urbanization in Maharashtra (Mumbai) has increased from 27.8 percent in 2001 to 31.1 percent in 2011(Census of India 2001; 2011) While MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority) has attempted to provide low-cost dwellings, the quality and availability of amenities are not guaranteed. The allocation process is carried out through a lottery system, which benefits only a small number of applicants. There have also been instances of corruption and malpractice, with some officials being caught for fraudulent activities, including withholding refunds from rejected applicants.

Strict regulations related to zoning and construction further limit the availability of land for housing the poor. At the same time, there is a lack of incentives for private builders to construct affordable homes. Since they are not provided with land at concessional rates or other supportive facilities, the total cost of construction becomes too high to cater to low-income residents.

Another contributing factor is the uncontrolled influx of migrants into cities. Urban areas cannot indefinitely expand their basic services to meet the needs of a constantly growing population. It is not feasible to regularly provide low-cost housing for all newcomers. The government may need to consider measures to regulate migration, allowing only those with secured housing and a stable source of income to settle.

The laws regarding property maintenance also discourage improvement. Poorly maintained houses are exempt from property taxes, which encourages owners to neglect them. Reversing the law - by taxing neglected properties more heavily and rewarding well-maintained ones with lower taxes - could motivate owners to invest in improvements.

Additionally, the government's lack of adequate funds hampers proper regulation of slum growth. There are no mobile squads to monitor and prevent the expansion of slums, and enforcement remains weak. Corruption, malpractice, and irregularities in zoning and construction permissions contribute to the unchecked spread of these settlements.

Finally, resistance from slum dwellers and local business owners adds to the challenge. Many proprietors of workshops or manufacturing units - whether legal or illegal - refuse to relocate even when offered free alternative plots. This lack of cooperation makes rehabilitation schemes difficult to implement.

5.1.3. Gentrification and Urban Decline

The term "gentrification" was first introduced in the 1960s by Ruth Glass to describe the transformation of working-class neighborhoods in London into areas inhabited by middle- and upper-class residents. In common usage today, gentrification refers to a process in which a neighborhood experiences an influx of wealth, accompanied by demographic shifts toward a more affluent, younger, and often whiter population. Supporters of gentrification argue that it benefits cities by expanding the tax base, revitalizing neglected areas, improving public safety, and attracting newcomers who stimulate economic growth. However, critics contend that gentrification has negative consequences, particularly because it often follows decades of disinvestment in poorer communities. The most significant concern they raise is displacement—a process where long-term, lower-income residents are gradually priced out of their neighborhoods due to rising rents, property taxes, and overall living costs.

Gentrification is not solely the result of individual choices; public investments play a key role in driving the process. One of the most influential forms of such investment is the development of public transit. Neighborhoods located near subways, light rail systems, and other transit options tend to attract wealthier residents in densely populated metropolitan areas. This demand pushes property values upward, as these newcomers are able to allocate a larger share of their higher incomes toward housing.

In addition to transit, other public investments can accelerate gentrification. These include improvements to public schools, expansion of universities and colleges along with their associated medical centers, creation or enhancement of parks and open spaces, and redevelopment of waterfronts in formerly industrial cities. In the latter case, old warehouses and factories are often repurposed into restaurants, bars, workspaces, and residential units, further transforming the social and economic character of the neighborhood.

Urbanization is advancing rapidly worldwide, including in India. Cities and large urban centers are undergoing urban renewal and development at a pace that is pushing them beyond their capacity. In this process, many cities are experiencing various forms of gentrification, which displaces middle- and lower-working-class residents as these areas become financially unaffordable. In India, gentrification is proving to be unsustainable on environmental, social, cultural, political, and economic fronts. The term refers to the arrival of wealthier residents in an existing urban area, leading to rising property values and rents, often altering the district's character and culture. It involves redevelopment and typically implies the displacement of the working lower class. By contrast, urban renewal focuses on improving and redeveloping urban spaces, usually involving the reconstruction of deteriorated buildings without necessarily changing their original purpose. Urbanization can be followed by urban renewal and then by gentrification, though the sequence can vary from place to place. Gentrification is sometimes described as a *"global urban strategy"* that highlights the interconnectedness between urbanization, urban renewal, and gentrification.

When gentrification takes place, wealthier individuals moving in generally have the resources to secure clean running water, electricity, and proper garbage and waste disposal. However, there is a critical need to address the environmental implications for displaced populations who lack the means to adopt and maintain sustainable living practices. In India, gentrification often forces many people into slums, which in turn increases their environmental footprint.

As demand for environmentally sustainable neighborhoods rises, gentrification drives property values even higher, creating a ripple effect of social, economic, cultural, and political consequences. It widens the wealth gap by pushing lower-working-class residents farther away from central urban spaces, increasing the physical and social distance between rich and poor. With growing migration toward urban centers, properties located near downtown areas, transportation hubs, quality shopping, and restaurants become increasingly desirable. This high demand, combined with gentrification, fuels a continuous rise in property values in major city centers.

In India, gentrification is occurring at an unprecedented pace, deepening the social divide and producing multiple adverse effects. Economically, it is unsustainable because the constant rise in property values creates a physical separation between the wealthy and the urban poor, as housing becomes financially inaccessible. The continual escalation of property prices and taxes driven by gentrification places further strain on affordability. Socially, it fuels tension and conflict when long-time residents are forced to leave their neighborhoods. Many families have deep roots in these areas, with livelihoods tied to nearby workplaces and businesses. The creation of gated communities within and around existing neighborhoods intensifies social division, resentment, and disputes.

From a cultural perspective, gentrification is often presented as a way to preserve a neighborhood's architectural heritage and cultural character. Many municipalities and local governments have launched initiatives to restore decaying historic infrastructure. However, the process is frequently carried out without adequately considering its effects on local populations and cultural heritage, leading to the erosion or destruction of a region's identity. Politically, there is potential to limit the harmful effects of gentrification, but most states have already integrated it into their urban renewal policies. Although government policies hold significant power to enact change, they currently serve as key drivers of ongoing gentrification through schemes designed to give urban areas a transformed appearance.

Gentrification is unsustainable across economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. At every level, careful planning is required to use urban space efficiently, promote sustainable development, and avoid prioritizing economic gains at the expense of the common citizen who suffers most from displacement. Culturally, there should be greater efforts to engage ordinary people, especially from the lower and working classes, in cultural activities. State governments must shift toward an urbanization model that considers residents' livelihoods, preserves cultural heritage, and supports long-term sustainability. With its vast population and numerous intersecting factors, India faces significant challenges as urbanization and gentrification accelerate. There is no single perfect model for sustainable urban development; managing the constant influx of people into urban centers remains an ongoing learning process. As policies are implemented and cities grow, there must be flexibility and a shift in priorities away from pure economic profit toward more equitable and inclusive urban growth.

5.1.4. Ethnic Enclave

Many large urban centres contain areas with a high concentration of residents belonging to a specific ethnic or cultural group. Commonly known as *ethnic neighbourhoods* or *ethnic enclaves*, these areas often reflect the traditions, cuisine, institutions, and entertainment associated with the community that inhabits them. Ethnic enclaves are geographically delimited regions where a community of immigrants sharing

common national or ethnic origins as well as class diversity owns a significant fraction of local businesses An ethnic enclave is defined as a geographical area where a particular ethnic group is spatially concentrated and remains socially and economically distinct from the majority population. These are typically urban spaces where culturally distinct minority communities maintain lifestyles that are largely separate from those of the surrounding, generally larger, population. The enclave model, developed by the sociologist Alejandro Portes and colleagues, was one of the most influential and controversial social science concepts of the late twentieth century

Ethnic enclaves have played an important role in easing the transition period for newly arrived immigrant groups who are culturally different from the host society. They provide a space where co-ethnics can form supportive social networks and develop potentially beneficial economic relationships. Such enclaves often foster an alternative, ethnic-specific labour market that does not require extensive social or cultural skills from the host country. In this way, the enclave serves as a "buffer" that lowers the costs of cultural and language assimilation, making these less critical for initial labour market success. Consequently, living in an ethnic enclave can enhance the economic performance of immigrants, particularly in the early stages of settlement.

However, there are also potential drawbacks to ethnic enclaves in terms of economic assimilation. The economic opportunities within an enclave are often limited in scope. While these areas may provide jobs in the short term, they may, over time, reduce the incentive for immigrants to acquire essential host-country skills—especially language proficiency. This can restrict their chances of securing higher-paying jobs in the broader labour market, particularly in sectors located outside the enclave. Furthermore, ethnic enclaves are often situated at a distance from prime employment hubs, further limiting the job prospects and upward mobility of their residents.

5.1.5. Gated Communities

Gated communities have emerged as a common form of housing development in cities across the globe. Atkinson and Blandy describe them as "walled or fenced housing developments" where public access is restricted and where residents are bound by legal agreements enforcing a shared code of conduct and collective responsibility for management.

Fig 5.1.3. Gated Community Villa in Bangalore

Two features define gated communities most distinctly: the physical barrier that limits entry and the restricted access for non-residents. Life within such communities is typically governed by strict regulations, which residents voluntarily agree to follow.

One widely used classification of gated communities was developed by Blakely and Snyder, based on their study of such developments in the United States. Their typology categorizes gated communities into three main types: lifestyle, prestige, and security zone communities. Lifestyle communities are centred around leisure and recreation, offering shared facilities and services such as retirement villages, golf course neighbourhoods, or planned suburban towns. Prestige communities are designed for status-conscious residents, serving as markers of wealth and exclusivity. These include neighbourhoods for the wealthy elite, upper-middle-class "top fifth" areas, and executive housing for the middle class. Security zone communities are shaped primarily by residents' concerns about crime and outsiders. This type encompasses urban, suburban, and "barricade perch" areas—so named because the gates are installed by the residents themselves rather than by developers.

The growth of gated communities has been driven by multiple factors. These include heightened fears of crime, the pursuit of a better quality of life, a desire for a stronger sense of community, the search for social uniformity, and aspirations for higher social standing or distinction within particular groups. Together, these motivations have contributed to the spread of gated living as a significant urban housing trend.

Recap

- Slum areas record higher rates of illness, disease, and infant mortality compared to non-slum areas.
- Residents often live under constant fear - of floods, storms, fires, or forced eviction - and tend to regard outsiders with suspicion.
- The Government of India's *Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act* of 1954 defines a slum as any predominantly residential area where lighting, sanitation, or a combination of such factors are inadequate and pose a risk to safety, health, or morals.
- Homelessness is a complex issue, and the circumstances of those affected can vary widely.
- Policies promoting employment and improving healthcare have resulted in more people enjoying higher disposable incomes and living longer than previous generations.
- Housing finance is a key factor in enabling house construction and related building activities.
- The development of slums is shaped by both economic conditions and social behaviors.

- Slums in India generally lack basic amenities and decent living conditions.
- The term "gentrification" was first introduced in the 1960s by Ruth Glass to describe the transformation of working-class neighborhoods in London into areas inhabited by middle- and upper-class residents.
- Gentrification is unsustainable across economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions.
- An ethnic enclave is defined as a geographical area where a particular ethnic group is spatially concentrated and remains socially and economically distinct from the majority population.
- Gated communities have emerged as a common form of housing development in cities across the globe.

Objective Questions

1. In Mumbai, what percentage of households live in semi-pucca houses?
2. Which metropolitan city has the lowest proportion of semi-pucca houses according to the data?
3. What is the definition of a *Notified Slum* according to the NSS?
4. In 1991, what percentage of India's total slum population lived in million-plus cities?
5. Which act passed in 1954 defines a slum as an area with inadequate lighting, sanitation, or a combination of such factors posing risks to safety, health, or morals?
6. Name the three main types of slums as classified by Bergel.
7. What is one of the primary causes of slum growth in Mumbai mentioned in the text?
8. Who first introduced the term *gentrification* and in which decade?
9. What is the most significant concern critics raise about gentrification?
10. Name one public investment that often accelerates gentrification.

11. According to Blakely and Snyder's typology, what are the three main types of gated communities?

12. What is an ethnic enclave?

Answers

1. 34%
2. Kolkata (5%)
3. A slum officially designated as such by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) or develop ment authorities.
4. 41%
5. The Slum Area (Improve ment and Clearance) Act of 1954.
6. Original slum, converted slum and slum developed due to transition.
7. Absence of affordable hous-ing for low-income groups.
8. Ruth Glass in the 1960s.
9. Displacement of long-term, lower-income residents.
10. Development of public transit systems (e.g., sub ways, light rail).
11. Lifestyle, prestige, and security zone communities.
12. A geographical area where a particular ethnic group is spatially concentrated and remains socially and economically distinct from the majority population.

Assignments

1. Discuss the variations in housing patterns among Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, and Chennai, and explain how these differences reflect broader urban housing challenges.
2. Critically examine the causes of slum growth in India, with specific reference to economic, social, and policy-related factors mentioned in the text.

3. Analyze the role of overcrowding in shaping urban social problems, highlighting its impact on health, safety, and community relations.

4. Critically examine the economic, social, and cultural impacts of gentrification in India, using examples from urban centers.

5. Compare and contrast the roles of *ethnic enclaves* and *gated communities* in shaping urban social and economic dynamics.

6. Discuss how public policy can balance urban renewal with the prevention of displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods.

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UNIT 2

Urban Poverty and Delinquency

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the causes, patterns, and consequences of urban poverty, crime, and juvenile delinquency using relevant sociological theories
- analyze the interrelationships between socio-economic inequality, urban living conditions, and criminal behavior
- evaluate policy measures, legal frameworks, and community-based interventions aimed at reducing urban crime and rehabilitating offenders, especially juveniles
- present evidence-based strategies to address the root causes of urban poverty and delinquency, promoting safer and more inclusive urban environments

Prerequisite

Picture walking through a busy city street; shops buzzing with customers, traffic weaving through crowded lanes, and young people chatting on corners. But behind this vibrant scene lies a less visible reality: for many urban residents, poverty shapes everyday life, influencing where they live, the opportunities they have, and even how they interact with the law. In this unit, we will explore three interconnected urban challenges; urban poverty, crime, and juvenile delinquency. Together, these issues affect the social fabric of cities, creating cycles that can be hard to break. By looking closely at their causes and consequences, we'll see how economic hardship, unemployment, and social exclusion often intertwine to shape patterns of urban behaviour.

As we journey through the topics, we'll ask critical questions: How does poverty push some individuals toward crime? Why are young people in certain neighborhoods more vulnerable to delinquent behavior? And how do urban environments—marked by inequality, overcrowding, and lack of opportunities—create conditions for these problems to persist? Through real-life case studies, sociological theories, and policy debates, this unit will invite you to think beyond the headlines. By the end, you will not only understand the complexity of these urban problems but also be able to consider strategies that promote safer, more inclusive, and more equitable cities.

Keywords

Absolute poverty, Poverty line, JNNURM, MGNREGS

Discussion

5.2.1. Urban Poverty

Poverty has been defined as a multifaceted and dynamic concept, though there is no single agreed-upon definition of urban poverty, but two major complementary perspectives are commonly used: economic and anthropological. The conventional economic approach measures poverty through income or consumption levels, supplemented by various social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, nutritional status, the share of household income spent on food, literacy rates, school enrolment, and access to basic services like healthcare and drinking water. However, poverty calculated solely on individual's income does not cover the other parameters of deprivation like access to safe drinking water, sanitation, health, literacy etc. Therefore, it is important to define poverty in broader terms taking deprivation and vulnerability into consideration. Poverty is more appropriately viewed in terms of the absence or limited access to opportunities for human development rather than merely as low income which is the standard identification of poverty (Sen Amartya,2005). These measures classify disadvantaged groups using a common index of material well-being. In contrast, alternative definitions - shaped largely by rural anthropologists and social planners working in developing countries - recognize local variations in how poverty is understood and broaden the concept to include perceptions of non-material deprivation and social inequality.

Anthropological research has revealed that people's own understanding of disadvantage often differs from expert assessments. Many place high importance on qualitative aspects of life, such as independence, security, self-respect, identity, equitable and supportive social relationships, freedom in decision-making, and access to legal and political rights.

In recent years, discussions on poverty have broadened to include more subjective dimensions, such as vulnerability, entitlement, and social exclusion. These concepts are valuable in examining the factors that heighten the risk of poverty and the reasons why it persists. Vulnerability, while not identical to

poverty, refers to a state of defenselessness, insecurity, and exposure to risks, shocks, and stress. It can be reduced through various assets, such as investments in health and education, ownership of productive resources like housing and household equipment, access to community infrastructure, savings or valuables, and the ability to draw on support from other households, patrons, governments, or international bodies during times of need. Entitlement describes the complex ways in which individuals or households gain access to resources, which can vary over time in response to sudden disruptions or long-term changes. Social exclusion refers to a condition of deprivation, disempowerment, or incapacity, in which individuals or groups are denied access to goods, services, activities, and resources linked to citizenship rights. Urban poverty is typically measured in two ways: as an absolute threshold, based on the minimum income needed (Income need perspective) for a healthy and minimally comfortable life, and as a relative measure, determined by the average standard of living within a given country.

Moser (1998) describes asset vulnerability as the restricted ways in which the urban poor are able to manage their "asset portfolio," which includes labor, human capital, housing, household relations, and social capital. Unlike the definitions provided by McDonald and McMillen, Moser's approach focuses on both those at risk of falling into poverty and those who remain trapped in it, rather than solely on individuals who are currently poor. By examining the full range of assets available to urban populations, researchers can better assess their capabilities and resilience in recovering from crises. Applying the asset vulnerability framework, Moser studied urban communities from diverse regions worldwide that shared certain conditions—a decade of economic hardship, declining per capita income, and rising urbanization rates.

While poverty is often defined as the "lack" or "deficiency" of resources essential for human survival and well-being, there is no agreement on what constitutes basic human needs or how they should be identified. Two primary approaches dominate the discussion: the conventional economic approach, which measures poverty through income, consumption, or other social indicators to compare disadvantaged groups against a universal index of material welfare; and alternative approaches, largely developed by rural anthropologists and social planners in the Global South, which recognize local variations in the meaning of poverty and expand the definition to include perceptions of non-material deprivation and social inequality.

5.2.1.1 Definitions of Poverty

A. Definitions based on Income or Consumption

Most economists agree that human welfare cannot be fully measured by income alone. However, in practice, income or consumption is the most commonly used indicator of welfare. This is because, in market-based economies, low income is closely linked to other forms of deprivation and can serve as a predictor of future poverty-related challenges. At the core of the economic view of poverty lies the concept of merit goods—items considered essential by society, for which there is a collective willingness to ensure access for all members. Income is generally understood as control over resources over time, or as the level of consumption that can be maintained without depleting capital.

Individuals are considered poor when their income or consumption falls below a threshold required to meet specific basic needs. For instance, the World Bank's *World Development Report* identifies two poverty lines: people with an annual per capita income below US $370 (at 1985 purchasing power parity) are classified as poor, and

those with less than US $275 are considered extremely poor. In 1994, an estimated 1.39 billion people were categorized as poor. In 2024, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 16 percent of the world's population, but 67 percent of the people living in extreme poverty. Two thirds of the world's population in extreme poverty live in Sub-Saharan Africa, rising to three quarters when including all fragile and conflict-affected countries. About 72 percent of the world's population in extreme poverty live in countries that are eligible to receive assistance from the International Development Association (IDA). Within nations, income and consumption data are used to distinguish between groups such as the "new poor" (those directly affected by structural adjustment policies), the "borderline poor" (those just above the poverty line who fall below it due to austerity measures), and the "chronic poor" (those who have remained in extreme poverty over time). Beyond measuring the *headcount index*—the proportion of the population below the poverty line—the World Bank also uses the *poverty gap index* to assess severity, calculating the gap between the poverty line and the average income of the poor as a ratio of the poverty line. Based on the current trajectory, 622 million people (7.3 percent of the global population) are projected to live in extreme poverty in 2030. This means, about 69 million people are projected escape extreme poverty between 2024 and 2030 compared to about 150 million who did so between 2013 and 2019. In addition, 3.4 billion people (nearly 40 percent of the world's population) will likely live on less than $6.85 per day. If growth does not accelerate and become more inclusive, it will take decades to eradicate extreme poverty and more than a century to lift people above the $6.85 per day poverty line.

Fig 5.2.1 Urban Streets in India

B. Poverty Line

The poverty line is a critical threshold that determines the minimum level of income, consumption, or access to goods and services required for individuals to be considered non-poor. This concept involves calculating the total expenditure needed for an adequate diet, clothing, and shelter. In India, it focuses on the cost of food to meet minimum calorie requirements. Globally, the World Bank

sets an International Poverty Line (IPL), updated to $1.90 per day in 2015.

Poverty lines based solely on income present several limitations. While income can help identify individuals who are likely to lack the means for achieving a socially acceptable standard of living, it does not fully reflect their actual ability to access such a standard. This capacity may be shaped by factors beyond income, such as education, access to information, legal rights, health conditions, threats of domestic violence, or personal insecurity. Defining "needs" is also challenging, as what people consider essential varies according to cultural context, personal preferences, and individual circumstances.

C. Absolute and Relative Pove- rty

When poverty is defined in absolute terms, needs are set at a fixed level that ensures subsistence, basic household goods, and essential services such as water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and transport. This approach, widely used by the World Bank and many governments, does not account for the degree of income inequality within a society or for the fact that needs are socially determined and evolve over time.

There are two main forms of poverty: absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is assessed against a fixed minimum level of living that families should be able to achieve. It includes access to basic food items like grains, vegetables, and milk products, as well as essential non-food goods and services needed for healthy living. These requirements are converted into monetary terms to define a poverty line, and anyone with consumption expenditure below this line is considered poor.

Relative poverty, on the other hand, is linked to inequality. It compares individuals to the average income levels of society. For instance, those earning only half of the national per capita income may be categorized as poor, even if they can afford the minimum consumption basket defined by the poverty line. Unlike absolute poverty, which focuses on survival needs, relative poverty highlights disparities in income and living standards within a society.

Relative Poverty considers poverty relative to the prevailing living standards within a society. Poverty lines are not fixed but shift based on societal norms and expectations. For example, someone considered poor in the United States with its higher standards of living might not be classified as such in IndiaAbsolute poverty measures must be periodically revised to reflect technological advancements, such as improved sanitation methods. In contrast, the concept of relative poverty is more adaptable, allowing minimum needs to be adjusted as societal living standards change. This perspective emphasizes that poverty can lead to exclusion from active participation in society—people are relatively deprived if they cannot secure "the conditions of life—such as diets, amenities, standards, and services—that enable them to fulfill expected roles, engage in relationships, and follow customary behaviours" associated with societal membership. By this measure, poverty could theoretically be more prevalent in cities like London, New York, or Tokyo than in Delhi, Lusaka, or Rio de Janeiro.

D. Definitions based on Social Indicators

Since many dimensions of well-being cannot be fully measured through income or consumption alone, additional social indicators are often used to define poverty. These include life expectancy, infant mortality, nutrition, the share of household expenditure spent on food, literacy, school enrolment, and access to healthcare or clean drinking water. The aim is to establish a standard scale that allows comparison across different population groups. Such measures

are particularly useful for comparing rural and urban welfare because they avoid complications arising from differences in rural–urban prices. Nevertheless, income and consumption remain the most common measures of poverty, despite the limitations of using a single indicator. To address this, composite poverty indices have been developed that combine several weighted indicators. For example, the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) merges income, literacy, and life expectancy into a single score between zero and one, enabling countries to be ranked by overall living standards.

Poverty measures are often constructed from the perspective of external professionals rather than from that of the poor people themselves. One concept that highlights this difference is vulnerability, which, unlike poverty, refers to defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risks, shocks, and stress. Vulnerability is tied to the assets people possess—such as health and education, housing, household equipment, access to community infrastructure, savings, jewellery, and claims on social networks, government aid, or international assistance in times of crisis. While poverty (as measured by income) can sometimes be alleviated by borrowing, debt can heighten vulnerability. Chambers notes that poor people often fear debt and are more aware than professionals of the trade-offs between poverty and vulnerability. Failing to distinguish these concepts obscures the varied experiences of the poor and sustains stereotypes. Understanding how households deplete their resources helps explain declines in well-being, even when economic or employment opportunities improve.

Another important concept is entitlement, which refers to the diverse ways individuals or households access resources. These may include wage labour, asset sales, personal production, reduced consumption, or public service provision. Entitlement patterns vary between people and change over time in response to shocks or long-term trends. While first used to study famine and hunger in rural areas, the concept is equally valuable for analysing urban poverty, as it reveals how different individuals—even within the same household—experience poverty differently. This distinction is essential for understanding survival strategies during times of stress, as well as the implications for gender roles, workloads, and how resources are shared within households.

According to Gillin and Gillin, poverty is a condition in which a person, due to either insufficient income or improper spending, fails to maintain a standard of living adequate for physical and mental efficiency, and cannot support himself and his dependents to function according to the norms of society.

Traditional economic definitions measure poverty primarily in terms of income or consumption, but these are often supplemented with broader social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, nutrition levels, the share of household income spent on food, literacy rates, school enrolment, and access to healthcare or safe drinking water. These indicators help classify poor groups against a standard index of material well-being.

5.2.1.2. Anti-Poverty Programs by Central Government

The government has implemented many programmes to eradicate poverty in the country. Among the various programmes launched for poverty alleviation, (since independence) Community Development Programme (CDP), National Food for Work Programme (NFWP), Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), Antyodaya Programme, Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Common Area Development Programme (CADP), Employment Assurance Scheme

(EAS), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Urban Basic Services for Poor (UBS) Valmiki Ambedkar Avas Yojana (VAMBAY), the National Slum Development Progamme (NSDP) Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission), ISHDP (Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme), BSUP (Basic Services to the Urban Poor), NULM (National Urban Livelihoods Mission (often referred to as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihood Mission, or DAY-NULM)), MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana are important.

5.2.2. Crime and Juvenile Delinquency

Among the many factors considered indicators of a successful life today, living in a city is often regarded as one of the most important and desirable. In pursuit of what is perceived as an ideal lifestyle, more and more people are migrating to urban areas. This influx is creating an imbalance in the supply and demand of essential resources due to overpopulation. According to United Nations projections (1999), the global population is expected to stabilize between 9.3 and 10 billion sometime between 2150 and 2200. Much of this growth will occur in urban areas, with populations in cities rising from 2.5 billion to over 6 billion, the majority of which will be in developing countries. In the nearer future, it is estimated that by 2020, 57 per cent of the world's population will be living in urban environments.

The strain on available resources is evident in the shortage of space, housing, food, and basic services for the expanding population. This scarcity fuels competition, rivalry, and a sense of insecurity. One of the most alarming manifestations of this insecurity is the growing incidence of crime in cities. Ironically, the very cities that draw economic power and foster growth have also become centres of crime and violence, severely hindering development. In the context of Indian cities, rising crime can be linked to widening economic inequality, persistent poverty, flawed urban planning, excessive pressure on infrastructure, the expansion of slums and underprivileged neighbourhoods, and shortcomings in the judicial and legal systems.

ALARMING STATISTICS

Year	Juveniles caught	Age 16-18 yrs	Age 12-16 yrs
2013	2,140	1,148	875 boys +10 girls
2012	1,541	860	617 boys +12 girls

CRIME TREND

2012	2013
Theft	Theft
Murder	Rape
Rape	Murder

Year	Type of case		
	Theft/ Snatchings	Rape	Murder
2013	928	163	76
2012	523	63	100

Fig 5.2.2 Juveniles and Crime Statistics. Source: NCRB

Crime statistics in India reveal a deeply troubling picture of the country's law and order situation. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, a total of 67,50,748 cognizable crimes were recorded in 2010. These included 22,24,831 cases under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 45,25,917 cases under Special and Local Laws (SLL). A closer examination of urban crime reveals specific patterns in mega cities. The most common offences in these areas are auto thefts, which account for 41.9% of the national total, followed by cheating (28.6%) and counterfeiting (27.8%). Such crimes reflect both the sophistication and the vulnerabilities of urban environments. However, the darker reality of cities becomes even more apparent in demographic indicators. According to the 2011 Census, the child sex ratio in urban India stands at 905 girls per 1,000 boys - 19 points lower than in rural areas. The NCRB Compendium further notes a 59.1% rise in cases of foeticide in 2012 compared to the previous year. While the term "female" is not explicitly mentioned, it is implied, given that medical termination of pregnancy is legal in India, whereas sex-selective abortion is not. Although the NCRB does not provide a direct urban-rural breakdown for this increase, the skewed sex ratio strongly suggests where cases of female foeticide are likely concentrated.

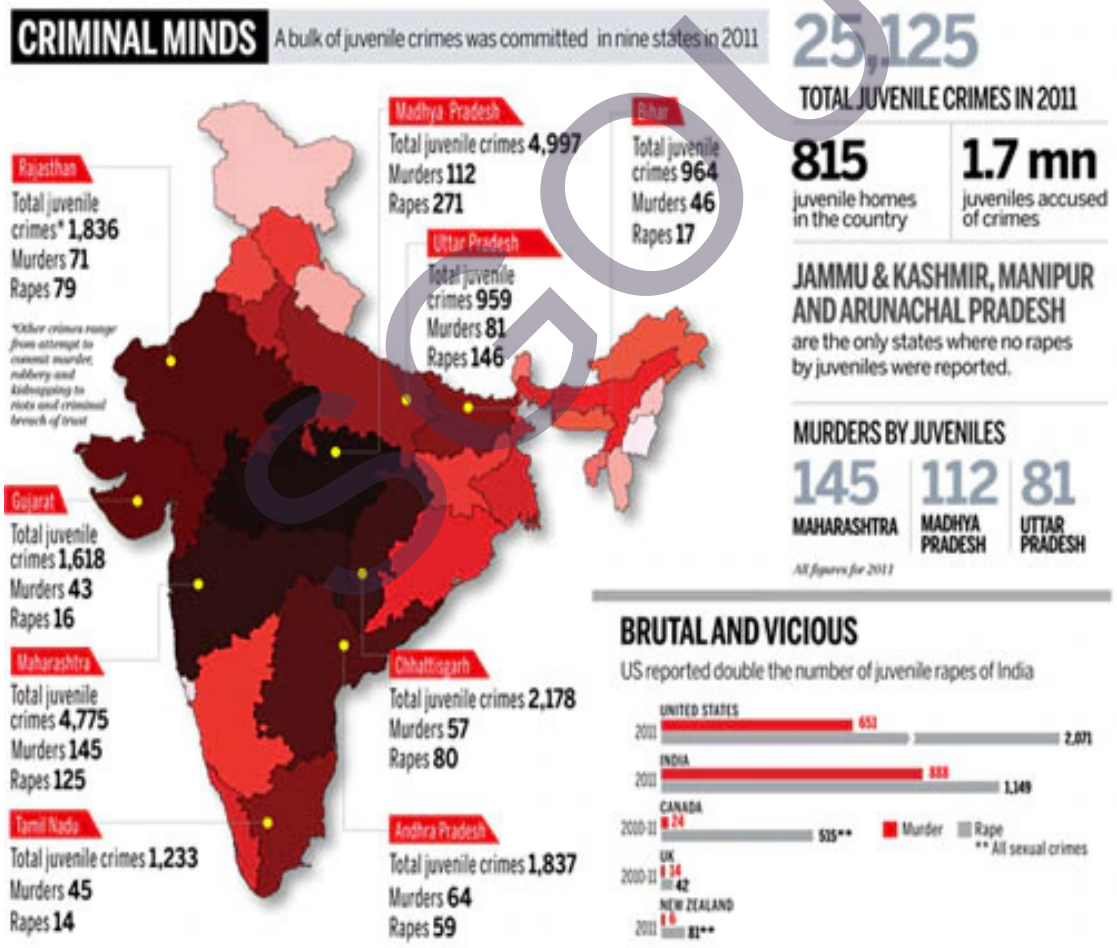

Fig 5.2.3. Juvenile Crimes- Source: India Today

5.2.2.1 Crime against Women in Cities

Crime against women includes any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. The Constitution of India recognized equality rights of women in Articles 14, 15 and 16. Article 15 (3) allowed the State for making special provisions for women and children to prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Despite the constitutional provisions and different gender specific laws in place, the problem of violence and crime against women has acquired phenomenal proportion. Violence and crime against women is a social problem which is linked to gender inequality and violates the right of women to live without fear with freedom and dignity.

When it comes to crimes committed against women, India records an alarming national rate of 41.74 cases per one million population. This figure is even higher in the 53 mega cities, where the rate reaches 47.76. These numbers specifically refer to offences targeting women, excluding those who may have been victims of general crimes. Among all cities, the national and political capital, Delhi, stands out with a disturbing record, accounting for 14.2% of the country's total crimes against women. The most common crimes against girls and women in Delhi include kidnapping and abduction (23.1% of the total in mega cities), rape (19.3%), trafficking (16.5%), dowry deaths (14.6%), and cruelty by husbands and relatives (11.1%). While these percentages may not seem exceptionally high at first glance, it is crucial to remember that Delhi is just one of 53 mega cities, which together represent only 13.3% of India's population. According to NCRB report of 2023, Delhi stands out with highest number of crimes against women followed by Mumbai and Bengaluru.

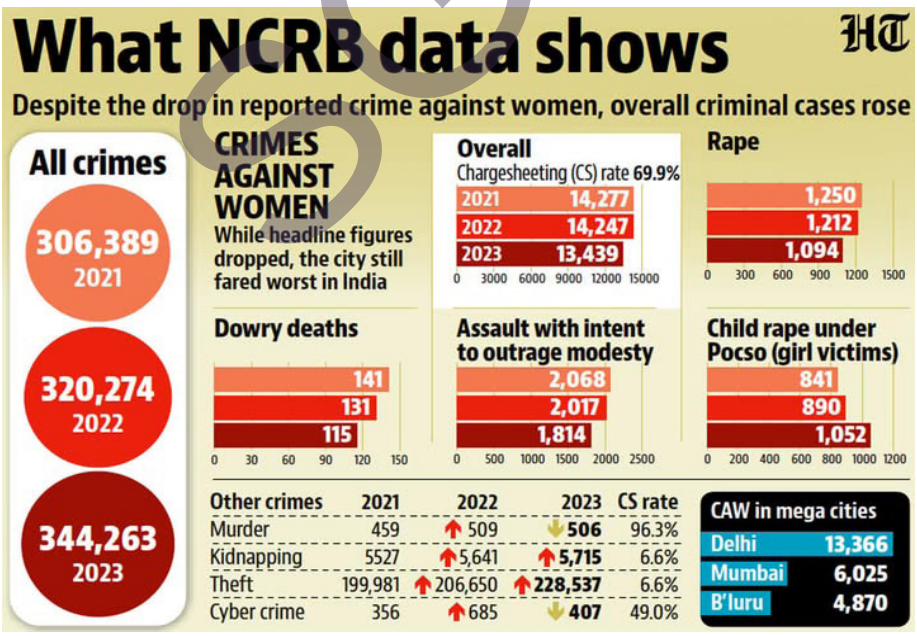

Fig 5.2.4. Crime against Women-2023 Source: NCRB Report-2023

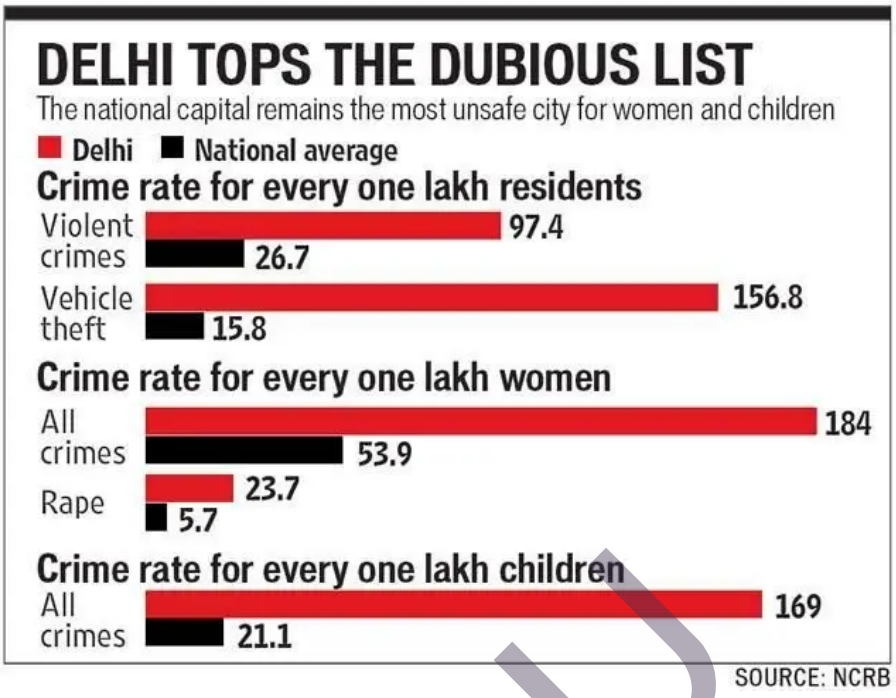

Fig 5.2.5. Crime Records in Delhi

However, lesser-known cities often reveal an even more disturbing scenario. While the overall rate of crimes against women in mega cities is 47.8, some smaller cities far exceed this figure. Vijayawada reports the highest rate at 256.4, followed by Kota at 130.2, and Kollam at 106.3. These figures challenge the common assumption that larger cities alone are the most unsafe for women.

The link between urban size and crime is not a new observation. Social commentators have long noted a correlation between urban environments and immoral behaviour, and criminologists have been studying the tendency of cities to generate crime for decades. Louis Wirth (1938) discussed this link, framing it as evidence for his theory of urbanism as a way of life. In his later work (1964), Wirth argued that unique urban traits - such as large population size, high density, social diversity, and impersonality- create a lifestyle that fosters higher crime rates. According to him, the close living and working proximity of people without emotional or sentimental ties encourages competition, self-interest, and mutual exploitation, making formal regulations necessary to prevent disorder. He viewed urbanism from three perspectives: as a physical or ecological structure, as a system of social organization, and as a set of attitudes and beliefs that influence collective behaviour. Building on this, Clinard (1942) argued that higher crime rates in densely populated urban areas compared to sparsely populated rural ones stem from factors such as high mobility, impersonal relationships, selective social associations, weak participation in community life, organized crime networks, and the normalization of criminal behaviour in offenders' life experiences. The relationship between urbanization and crime has thus been a long-recognized theme in criminological research.

In the nineteenth century, descriptive studies from the cartographic or statistical school documented the consistent patterns of crime. Another line of thought in criminology highlighted the opportunities that cities provide for potential offenders.

Urban areas present more suitable targets and offer greater temptation for crime compared to rural settings. Coupled with weaker informal guardianship in urban spaces, these factors help explain the higher crime rates found in cities. However, some scholars have challenged these theoretical models. Johnson (1992), for instance, provided socio-historical evidence suggesting that cities are not inherently dangerous or more prone to criminality. Examining rural–urban crime differences in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he found that urban size, population density, and growth had minimal—or at times even negative—influence on crime rates. Instead, he observed stronger correlations between crime and factors such as the proportion of ethnic minorities, mortality rates, and poverty levels.

Urbanization and industrialization are dynamic social processes that, over time, increase physical mobility for individuals. When people are displaced by these changes and enter new environments with unfamiliar behavioural norms, traditional institutions and social sanctions often lose their effectiveness, making it easier for individuals to adopt deviant behaviours. High migration rates can thus create social strain, which is often linked to rising crime and other forms of social disorganization. Social change can also introduce new norms, values, and consumption patterns that may provoke more criminal activity.

Overall, the theoretical debate leads to the conclusion that greater urbanization reduces social cohesion and weakens informal social control. This decline in integration and oversight contributes to higher levels of crime, disorder, victimization, and fear. The combined effects of industrialization and urbanization influence crime by reshaping social structures, fostering cultural conflict, and altering spatial environments—conditions that encourage the growth of criminal elements. Many empirical studies have tried to establish the link between urbanization and crime, with some findings suggesting that urbanization also contributes to rural crime. In this sense, urbanization can be seen as a tipping point that both creates new forms of crime and intensifies existing ones.

Recap

- Urban poverty is typically measured in two ways: as an absolute threshold, based on the minimum income needed for a healthy and minimally comfortable life, and as a relative measure, determined by the average standard of living within a given country.
- Poverty lines based solely on income present several limitations.
- Poverty measures are often constructed from the perspective of external professionals rather than from that of the poor themselves.
- Participatory research methods help identify the risks that lead to poverty and the reasons people remain poor.
- The strain on available resources is evident in the shortage of space, housing, food, and basic services for the expanding population.

- Crime statistics in India reveal a deeply troubling picture of the country's law and order situation.
- The most common offences in these areas are auto thefts, which account for 41.9% of the national total, followed by cheating (28.6%) and counterfeiting (27.8%).
- In the nineteenth century, descriptive studies from the cartographic or statistical school documented the consistent patterns of crime.
- Urbanization and industrialization are dynamic social processes that, over time, increase physical mobility for individuals.

Objective Questions

1. Which two major perspectives are commonly used to define urban poverty?
2. What does the conventional economic approach primarily used to measure poverty?
3. In Moser's framework, what does "asset vulnerability" refer to?
4. What are the two main types of poverty measurement mentioned?
5. Which three components make up the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI)?
6. What does the concept of 'entitlement' describe in the context of poverty?
7. According to the World Bank's World Development Report, people with less than US $275 annual per capita income (at 1985 PPP) are classified as what?
8. According to the United Nations projections (1999), when is the global population expected to stabilise between 9.3 and 10 billion?
9. What percentage of the world's population was estimated to be living in urban environments by 2020?
10. Which city accounts for 14.2% of the country's total crimes against women?

11. According to Louis Wirth, which unique urban traits foster higher crime rates?

12. In which city is the highest rate of crimes against women recorded?

Answers

1. Economic and anthropological perspectives.
2. Income or consumption levels, supplemented by social indicators.
3. The restricted ways in which the urban poor can manage their asset portfolio, including labor, human capital, housing, household relations, and social capital.
4. Absolute threshold and relative measure.
5. Income, literacy, and life expectancy.
6. The various ways individuals or households gain access to resources, which can change over time due to shocks or trends.
7. Extremely poor.
8. Between 2150 and 2200.
9. 57%.
10. Delhi
11. Large population size, high density, social diversity, and impersonality.
12. Vijayawada

Assignments

1. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the economic and anthropological perspectives on defining urban poverty. Use examples to illustrate your points.
2. Discuss the significance of including concepts such as vulnerability, entitlement, and social exclusion in the study of urban poverty. How do these broaden our understanding beyond income-based measures?

3. Using Moser's asset vulnerability framework, analyze how urban poor households in a developing country manage crises and maintain resilience over time. Provide at least one case study or hypothetical scenario.
4. Discuss the key factors that contribute to the rise of crime in Indian cities, citing relevant statistics from the NCRB.
5. Critically analyse Louis Wirth's theory of "urbanism as a way of life" in explaining urban crime, and evaluate its relevance to contemporary Indian urban society.
6. Examine the relationship between urbanization, industrialization, and juvenile delinquency, highlighting both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings

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UNIT 3

Urban Pollution and Issues of Waste Management

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify major types and sources of urban pollution, including air, water, noise, and soil pollution
- analyze the environmental, social, and health impacts of various forms of urban pollution and improper waste management practices
- evaluate existing waste management systems, policies, and technologies in urban areas, highlighting their effectiveness and limitations
- propose sustainable and community-oriented strategies for pollution control and integrated waste management in urban settings

Prerequisite

Imagine stepping outside on a busy city morning - the air carries a mix of vehicle exhaust, dust, and the faint smell of burning garbage; the streets are alive with activity, but also dotted with overflowing bins and plastic waste. This is the everyday reality in many urban areas, where rapid growth and consumer lifestyles put enormous pressure on the environment. In this unit, we'll discuss the pressing challenges of urban pollution and waste management. We'll explore how air, water, noise, and soil pollution emerge in city settings, why they affect urban residents differently, and how poor waste handling can turn small environmental problems into major public health crises.

As we move through the topics, we'll also ask critical questions: Why do cities struggle to keep up with the waste they generate? How do unplanned growth and

poor infrastructure worsen pollution levels? And what role can technology, policy, and citizen action play in creating cleaner, healthier cities? Through case studies, interactive discussions, and real-life examples, this unit will help you see urban pollution and waste management not just as environmental issues, but as deeply social challenges that require innovative, inclusive, and sustainable solutions.

Keywords

Eutrophication, Urban pollution, Industial efflvents, Ganga Action Plan

Discussion

5.3.1 Urban Environment

India, the world's second most populous nation, had a population of 1.03 billion in 2001. Of this, approximately 285 million people, or 27.8% of the total population, lived in urban areas. In 2001, India accounted for 10.02% of the world's urban population and 21.10% of Asia's urban population. In absolute numbers, India's urban population exceeded the total population of countries such as France and Germany, and was larger than that of major nations like Brazil and the United States. It also surpassed the combined populations of regions like Eastern Africa, Western Asia, and Western Europe, as well as the entire continent of Australia.

Although India's level of urbanization- measured as the proportion of urban to total population - is relatively low, the sheer size of its urban population is enormous. A significant share of this population is concentrated in Class I cities, which house about 65% of urban residents and are growing faster than the overall population rate. A closer analysis reveals that metropolitan cities with populations exceeding one million have been expanding rapidly, with their numbers rising from 12 in 1981 to 23 in 1991, and further to 35 in 2001. In that year, these metropolitan areas accounted for almost one-third of the total urban population and 10.5% of India's total population. Over half of the metro population lived in five major urban centers - Mumbai (16.3 million), Kolkata (13.2 million), Delhi (12.7 million), Chennai (6.4 million), and Bangalore (5.7 million). These cities experienced population growth rates 52% higher than the national urban growth rate. However, compared to the previous decade, the pace of metropolitan growth slowed, with 12 newly designated cities growing faster than the older ones- Surat leading with an 85% increase.

The rapid urbanization in India, fueled largely by large-scale rural-to-urban migration, has led to serious challenges for city life. Unregulated urban growth, especially in large cities, has resulted in significant environmental deterioration, including severe air and water pollution, water scarcity in drought-prone areas, problems in managing solid and hazardous waste, noise pollution, housing shortages, and the expansion of slums. The social environment of cities is also under strain due to factors such as unchecked migration, illegal settlements, socio-cultural diversity,

income inequality, and widespread urban poverty. These conditions have contributed to rising crime rates in metropolitan areas, where organized gangs, professional criminals, and even juveniles view crime as a quick route to a luxurious lifestyle. Additionally, relentless population growth has put immense pressure on existing urban infrastructure, including electricity supply, potable water availability, transportation systems, and educational and healthcare facilities.

At present, urbanization in India is marked by haphazard and unchecked expansion, resulting in rapid urban growth. Patterns of land use, along with the spatial relationship between residential zones, industrial sectors, and commercial or office complexes, significantly influence environmental conditions. However, the development of adequate infrastructure has lagged behind the pace of economic growth. As a result, the environmental quality in urban areas—especially in large cities—has been declining at an alarming rate.

5.3.1.1 Increase in the Temperature

A strong positive link between land surface temperature and impervious surfaces clearly shows that urban growth areas experience a rise in temperature . On warm days, cities can be about 6–8°F (3.5–4.5°C) hotter than surrounding rural areas, a phenomenon known as the *urban heat island* effect . This effect is mainly driven by two factors. First, dark surfaces like roads and rooftops absorb sunlight efficiently and release it as thermal infrared radiation, often reaching 50–70°F (28–39°C) higher than the surrounding air. Second, urban areas typically lack vegetation, especially trees, which could otherwise provide shade and cool the air through evapotranspiration.

As cities expand outward, the heat island effect not only grows in geographic spread but also increases in intensity, particularly when development involves large-scale tree removal and road construction. Additionally, the sprawling growth of metropolitan regions triggers a feedback loop that worsens the problem. Greater travel distances lead to higher automobile usage, which increases fuel combustion, releases more carbon dioxide, and contributes to global climate change. This, in turn, can intensify the heat island effect. Therefore, both the physical form of metropolitan areas and the greenhouse gas emissions from increased driving play a role in urban warming. Furthermore, the number of inhabitants is a key factor—larger cities with more residents tend to experience higher urban temperatures.

5.3.2 Urban Pollution

Urban air pollution is now one of the biggest health and environmental problems of our time. It's become very important for scientists, politicians, and city residents to keep the air quality high in cities as they continue to industrialize and grow at an unheard-of rate. According to the World Health Organization (2018), 90% of people around the world are exposed to air that has high amounts of pollutants. People who live in cities are especially at risk.

The environment refers to the surrounding conditions, objects, or circumstances that influence humans, animals, plants, or other entities. In common usage, the term is often associated with the natural world as experienced and perceived by human beings. Pollution, on the other hand, is the introduction of harmful substances into the environment, as well as the act or process of contaminating it. Most often, pollution arises from human activities, even when the by-products appear harmless at first. If these products later cause harmful effects, they are still considered pollutants. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes pollution as the presence

of substances in the environment whose chemical makeup or quality interferes with natural processes and creates undesirable impacts on both the environment and human health. Any substance responsible for such contamination is termed a pollutant.

Fig 5.3.1. Cities and the Air Pollution

The definition of pollution can also depend on the context. For example, algal blooms that lead to eutrophication in lakes, rivers, and coastal waters are treated as pollution when they are driven by nutrient run-off from agriculture, industry, or households. Similarly, carbon dioxide (CO_2), though non-toxic and beneficial for plant growth, is regarded as a pollutant in the context of global warming since it functions as a greenhouse gas. However, emissions from fuel combustion are more often referred to neutrally as "emissions" rather than pollution.

Conventional forms of pollution include air and water pollution, but the term has expanded to include issues such as noise pollution, light pollution, and even marine-vessel pollution. Major contributors to environmental contamination include chemical factories, oil refineries, nuclear and garbage dumps (often containing toxic waste), incinerators, Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC) production units, and large-scale animal farms that generate massive amounts of waste. Common pollutants such as lead, arsenic, zinc, chromium, and benzene are linked to serious health problems, including cancer, lupus, immune disorders, allergies, and asthma. Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) is another very bad pollution in cities. It is mostly released when cars and factories burn fuel. According to Bleviss (2021), the transportation sector is a major source of NO2 pollution. Exposure to NO2 can irritate the lungs and make people more likely to get respiratory infections. Children and the old are especially at risk. Even though

sulfur dioxide (SO2) levels have gone down in many developed countries because of stronger rules on fuel quality, it is still a problem in cities that are becoming more industrialized quickly. In their 2020 study, Yun et al. talk about how residential solid fuel use has a big effect on SO2 levels in some developing city areas

Urban pollution, which refers to pollution found in towns and cities, arises from a wide range of sources. These include transportation systems such as cars and trains, construction and building activities, faulty drainage connections where wastewater is directed to the wrong places, surface run-off from everyday activities like car washing, and discharges from polluted or contaminated land. Among these, certain sources are considered priority concerns. These include drainage misconnections, run-off activities, emissions from industrial estates, and pollution stemming from contaminated urban rivers. Because it originates from multiple sources and contains a mixture of different pollutants, urban pollution is often described as Non-Agricultural Diffuse Pollution (NADP).

5.3.2.1. Misconnections & Phosphates in Detergents

A misconnection occurs when a building's drainage system is linked to the wrong sewage network. There are two main types of misconnections. The first happens when foul or contaminated water enters the surface water system, which reduces water quality and harms the overall value of the surrounding environment. The second occurs when surface water, such as rainwater, is directed into the foul sewer that is designed to carry household sewage, often leading to sewer flooding. Misconnections are recognized as a significant source of urban diffuse pollution. Addressing this issue forms part of Commitment 27 outlined in the Natural Environment White Paper.

Phosphate is an essential nutrient, but when present in excessive amounts in rivers and lakes, it can trigger excessive plant and algae growth. Such algal blooms are harmful to aquatic ecosystems because they block sunlight and deplete oxygen levels, resulting in a decline in water quality. This process, known as eutrophication, damages the ecological balance of rivers and lakes and reduces their potential for various uses. Phosphates commonly enter water bodies through sewage. The main contributors are human waste, food residues, and detergents. To tackle this issue, steps have been taken to cut down phosphate levels in household products, including its removal from laundry detergents in 2013 and from dishwasher detergents in 2017. Efforts are also being made in collaboration with farmers to minimize phosphate run-off from agricultural fields, as well as with water companies to limit the discharge of phosphates from sewage treatment plants.

5.3.3. Air Quality and Pollution

Urban growth is recognized as a significant contributor to air pollution, as the car-dependent lifestyle it fosters leads to increased fossil fuel consumption and higher greenhouse gas emissions. According to Frumkin (2002), this expansion encourages greater automobile usage, which in turn adds pollutants such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, ground-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and fine particulate matter into the atmosphere. These substances can hinder plant growth, cause smog and acid rain, accelerate global warming, and pose serious health risks to humans. Although it may seem that low-density urban growth could offer better environmental conditions and cleaner air, research by Kahn and Schwartz

(2008) indicates that air pollution continues to increase alongside urban expansion.

Fig 5.3.2 Air Pollution in Delhi

Higher temperatures in urban areas also indirectly worsen air quality. Rising heat boosts the demand for energy to operate fans, air coolers, water coolers, and air conditioners, prompting power plants- most of which rely on burning fossil fuels- to increase output. This leads to greater emissions of pollutants such as carbon dioxide, particulate matter, sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, and toxic air contaminants. Moreover, elevated temperatures enhance the formation of ozone from its precursors, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons .

Air pollution refers to the contamination of the atmosphere with harmful gases and fine particles of solid or liquid matter (particulates) present in concentrations that pose risks to human health. Its primary sources include motor vehicles, power and heat generation, industrial activities, and the burning of solid waste. The combustion of gasoline and other hydrocarbon fuels in cars, trucks, and airplanes releases major pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and particulates, particularly lead. When exposed to sunlight, nitrogen oxides react with hydrocarbons to form photochemical oxidants, including ozone and peroxyacetylnitrate (PAN), which irritates the eyes. Nitrogen oxides also combine with oxygen to produce nitrogen dioxide, a brown, pungent gas. In large cities such as Los Angeles, where vehicles are the main source of pollution, nitrogen dioxide mixes with other contaminants and water vapour to create the characteristic brown smog. Catalytic converters have helped reduce smog-forming emissions from vehicles, but they also generate nitrous oxide, a gas that significantly contributes to global warming.

In urban centers, air pollution is worsened not only by vehicles but also by the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil in power plants, factories, offices, and homes, as well as by garbage incineration. These activities release massive amounts of ash, soot, and particulates, producing the grey smog typical of cities like New Delhi and Kolkata, along with large volumes of sulphur oxides. Such oxides corrode iron, damage stone structures, deteriorate nylon, tarnish silver, and harm vegetation. Pollutants from cities are also carried into rural areas far downwind.

Different industries generate distinct pollution patterns. Petroleum refineries release large amounts of hydrocarbons and particulates, while iron and steel plants, smelters, pulp and paper mills, chemical factories, and cement or asphalt plants emit heavy particulate pollution. High-voltage

power lines without insulation ionize surrounding air, creating ozone and other dangerous by-products. Other sources of airborne pollutants include insecticides, herbicides, radioactive fallout, and dust from fertilizers, mining operations, and livestock feedlots.

5.3.3.1. Effects on Health and Environment

Air pollution harms humans, animals, and plants worldwide. Each breath we take introduces harmful pollutants into our bodies. These pollutants may cause short-term problems such as irritation of the eyes and throat, but their long-term effects are far more serious, including cancer and damage to the immune, nervous, reproductive, and respiratory systems. Children are especially vulnerable because of their smaller body size and ongoing development. Although the exact ways pollutants trigger these health issues are not fully understood, several mechanisms have been suggested.

One explanation for pollution-related lung disease is that tiny particles enter the alveoli and cause lung inflammation. For people who already suffer from lung damage or respiratory illnesses, this inflammation can make their condition worse. Air pollution is also linked to heart attacks, with two possible mechanisms proposed:

1. Lung inflammation may cause macrophages to release chemicals that alter the blood's clotting system.

2. Airborne irritants in the lungs may trigger a neural reflex that disrupts heart rhythm and rate.

Air pollution contributes to global climate change as well, mainly through the rise in carbon dioxide emissions, a major greenhouse gas. Even a global temperature increase of just 1°C could have dangerous outcomes, such as melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, heavier rainfall, and extreme weather events like hurricanes, tornadoes, heatwaves, floods, and droughts. Indirectly, this also increases infectious diseases, weather-related deaths, and shortages of food and water—further straining agriculture, ecosystems, and the planet as a whole.

Importantly, air pollution is not limited to cities. Pollutants can travel hundreds of miles from their source and contaminate different ecosystems for long periods since many remain toxic in the environment. They continue to damage streams, ponds, forests, and fields. Environmental consequences such as acid rain and global warming are clear examples of how air pollution disrupts nature on a large scale.

5.3.4 Water Quality in Urban Centres

Urban growth significantly affects both the quality and quantity of water resources. The expansion of roads, parking areas, and residential zones over formerly natural landscapes prevents rainwater and snowmelt from seeping into the ground, thereby reducing the recharge of groundwater aquifers. As urban areas expand and impervious surfaces increase, total runoff volumes rise, which heightens flood risks - particularly in flood-prone regions - causing problems such as inundation and soil erosion (Jacquin et al., 2008). Continued development on the outskirts of existing cities has raised growing concerns among the public, governments, urban planners, and insurance companies about flooding disasters and escalating damages (Wisner et al., 2004; Jacquin et al., 2008).

In urban settings, stormwater flows into drainage systems and eventually into rivers and lakes. During heavy rainfall, excess water can greatly accelerate flows through

wetlands and rivers, uprooting vegetation, destroying habitats along riverbanks, and contributing to severe downstream flooding. Runoff also carries pollutants such as garden chemicals, motor oil, and road salt into water bodies, degrading water quality. Sprawling development, which requires extensive paving, intensifies this runoff and contaminates waterways. Pollutants from such runoff can enter the human body through consumption of contaminated fish or drinking water from polluted surface and groundwater sources. Furthermore, intense rainstorms in cities lacking adequate stormwater management systems can cause untreated sewage to be discharged directly into waterways through combined sewer overflows.

a. Domestic Sewage

Household waste, often referred to as sanitary sewage, is the wastewater discarded from homes. It contains a mix of dissolved and suspended impurities. While it makes up only a small fraction of sewage by weight, its volume is large and it carries substances such as organic matter and plant nutrients that decompose easily. Common organic components include leftover food, vegetable waste, soaps, and washing powders. Domestic sewage also poses health risks, as it often carries disease-causing microorganisms. Proper disposal of this wastewater is therefore a major technical challenge. In India, the amount of sewage produced by urban areas has increased drastically since independence in 1947.

A common problem is the dumping of household waste directly into water bodies like rivers, lakes, streams, and seas. This turns these water sources into dumping grounds for plastics, bottles, cans, and other household items. Additionally, many cleaning products contribute to water pollution because they contain harmful chemicals. Unlike earlier times, when people used soaps made from natural fats, most modern cleaning products are synthetic detergents produced by the petrochemical industry. These detergents and washing powders often contain phosphates, which are added to soften water. However, phosphates and other chemicals present in these products harm aquatic ecosystems and threaten the health of living organisms in the water.

b. Industrial Effluents in Urban India

Industrial activities, particularly those involving manufacturing and chemical processes, are major contributors to water pollution. Wastewater released from these industries often contains distinct and identifiable chemical compounds. Over the last five decades, the rapid growth of industries in India has intensified the problem, though pollution is concentrated in a few key sectors, especially those generating toxic substances and organic pollutants. A significant share of this contamination comes from industries involved in chemical processing and food production.

In the areas covered under the Ganga Action Plan, many medium- and large-scale industries lack proper effluent treatment facilities. Among the main offenders are sugar mills, distilleries, leather-processing units, and thermal power plants. While most large industries are equipped with systems to treat industrial wastewater, the situation is different for small-scale industries. Due to limited profits, they often cannot afford the high costs of installing pollution control equipment, making them particularly vulnerable to causing untreated discharges.

c. Effects of Water Pollution

The consequences of water pollution are wide-ranging. They include toxic drinking water, the destruction of balanced river and lake ecosystems that can no longer sustain

diverse forms of life, forest loss due to acid rain, and many other harmful outcomes. The impact varies according to the type of contaminant.

Almost all pollutants in water are dangerous to humans as well as to other living organisms. For instance, sodium is linked to heart disease, while nitrates contribute to blood-related illnesses. Heavy metals such as mercury and lead damage the nervous system, and some pollutants are known carcinogens. DDT, a toxic chemical, can affect human chromosomes, while PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) lead to liver and nerve damage, skin problems, nausea, fever, diarrhea, and birth defects. In coastal regions, shellfish populations have been wiped out due to contamination from DDT, sewage, and industrial discharges. Diseases such as dysentery, salmonellosis, cryptosporidiosis, and hepatitis are spread through sewage in drinking and bathing water.

Across many countries, beaches along oceans, rivers, and lakes have been degraded by pollution from bathers, industrial effluents, municipal waste, and discarded medical materials. The issue is even more severe in developing nations, where millions rely on unprotected streams and ponds for drinking and sanitation, despite these sources being polluted with human waste. Such contamination causes over 3 million deaths every year from diarrhea in developing countries, with the majority of victims being children.

d. Controlling the Problem of Water Pollution in Urban India

Science offers a range of practical methods to reduce the current level of pollutants entering the environment and to clean up damage caused by past contamination. However, these solutions always involve both financial and social costs. On an individual level, much can be done to lessen pollution if we recycle products whose production generates pollutants and handle household chemicals and their disposal responsibly. Our daily choices also play a role in pollution levels. For example, processed foods with heavy packaging - such as boxes, cartons, and bottles made with harmful dyes - often release pollutants into groundwater once they reach landfills. Similarly, choosing to drive short distances instead of walking or cycling increases acid and hydrocarbon emissions, which ultimately affect global freshwater resources.

Since water is essential to life on Earth, maintaining its quality is more valuable than simply ensuring quantity. The usability of water depends on its quality, and in turn, the way we use water influences that quality. This cycle makes it clear that the old practice of dumping untreated sewage and chemical waste directly into rivers, lakes, and oceans for "natural assimilation" is no longer acceptable, either from a technical standpoint or an ethical one.

With rapid population growth, industrial expansion, and the continuous creation of new chemicals and products, the environmental burden has become global in scale. Natural processes in water bodies are no longer sufficient to neutralize these pollutants. Therefore, pollution control must consider two key factors: the type of pollutant (whether degradable, persistent, metallic, pesticide-based, or PCB-related) and the source of pollution (whether from industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, or atmospheric deposition).

Fig 5.3.3 Water Pollution in the Ganga River

Regulations: Ideally, pollutants should be stopped from entering water bodies altogether. The main sources that need strict control to prevent water quality decline include air pollution, agricultural runoff and seepage carrying fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals, industrial discharges (whether directly from factories or indirectly through leaching from landfills), and household pollution from untreated municipal sewage. In some cases, only very low concentrations of contaminants may be tolerated. When determining how to prevent or regulate water pollution, important questions must be considered: What are the sources, quantities, and impacts of pollutants? What happens to these substances once they enter the water? Is it possible to stop them from reaching water bodies, or can they be removed through treatment? For chemicals that cannot be eliminated through water treatment, prevention is the only effective regulatory approach.

Technology: In many situations, technology provides ways to reduce or completely remove harmful substances from wastewater. Properly operated sewage treatment plants, for example, can eliminate many toxic compounds and return treated water to rivers or lakes without significant downstream harm.

Being a responsible consumer: On an individual level, everyone can help safeguard water quality by acting responsibly. Even routine activities, such as washing dishes, create wastewater that contains pollutants and must be treated. Since treatment plants are never fully effective, some deterioration in water quality always remains. Therefore, everyday choices - such as using safer products, limiting chemical use, following recycling programs, and disposing of waste properly - play a crucial role in maintaining clean water.

5.3.5 Noise Pollution in Urban Centres

Noise pollution is not easily defined, largely because it differs from other forms of pollution. Unlike chemical or sewage pollution in air, soil, or water, noise is temporary - it disappears as soon as the source stops. While other pollutants can be measured and their safe limits estimated, noise is harder to assess. Although individual sounds that damage hearing can be measured, it is difficult to track cumulative exposure or determine the exact threshold of harm.

The perception of noise is also highly subjective. A sound that one person finds exciting, like the roar of an engine or loud music, may be irritating or disturbing to someone else. In general, any unwanted or unpleasant sound - from the thunder of a jet overhead to a dog barking in the distance- can be classified as noise pollution.

Fig 5.3.4 Congested Highway in Noida

Noise is considered a form of pollution mainly because of its impact on health. It is a source of stress, and stress is a leading cause of illness and even suicide. Thus, if a sound leads to annoyance, fear, sleeplessness, or any stress-related reaction, it qualifies as noise pollution. Its impact depends not only on volume but also on time, place, duration, source, and whether the listener has control over it. For instance, most people would tolerate the sound of a 21-gun salute during a ceremony, but faint music from a neighbor's house at 2 a.m. could cause serious stress.

City residents are constantly exposed to high levels of noise, often intense enough to result in permanent hearing damage. Noise, essentially pressure waves in the air, becomes especially problematic when amplified by public address systems and loudspeakers used during elections, advertisements, religious festivals, or weddings. Among the many sources of noise in cities, motor vehicle traffic is the most significant contributor. The level of noise produced by vehicles varies according to factors such as the vehicle type, engine capacity, and its physical condition, but collectively they account for the largest share of urban noise pollution.

5.3.5.1 Measurement of Sound and its Effects

Noise is measured in decibels (dB), which indicate the intensity of sound or the size of the air pressure fluctuations caused by sound waves. The decibel scale is logarithmic rather than arithmetic, meaning that sound intensity does not increase in a simple doubling manner. For instance, an increase of 3 dB represents a doubling of sound intensity, while an increase of 10 dB indicates a tenfold increase in intensity.

A sound level of 0 dB marks the threshold of hearing for a young, healthy ear, while sounds between 120-130 dB reach the level of pain or discomfort. To measure sound more accurately, filters are used to highlight certain frequencies. The A filter (dBA) is the most commonly applied, while the C filter (dBC) gives more weight to low-frequency sounds, like heavy bass in amplified music.

Fig 5.3.5 Limits of Noise Pollution

The way humans perceive loudness does not directly match dB levels. For example, a sound that is 10 dB louder than another is perceived as only about three times louder, not ten times. Furthermore, the intensity of sound decreases with distance. In open spaces without nearby reflecting surfaces, the sound level drops by 6 dB every time the distance doubles. For example, a sound of 100 dB at 10 m reduces to 94 dB at 20 m, 88 dB at 40 m, and continues to decrease with distance.

Noise pollution is an example of a social cost - a price society pays for modern lifestyles. Because permanent hearing loss develops gradually, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when noise becomes harmful to the ears. Since sound intensity doubles with every 3 dB increase, the safe exposure time is reduced by half with each such rise. For example, a worker can be safely exposed to 75 dBA for 8 hours, 78 dBA for 4 hours, and so on. Short exposure to sounds of up to 100 dBA is generally not harmful if the average exposure remains within the recommended limits.

Beyond hearing loss, noise is harmful in other ways as well. It can contribute to stress, illness, aggression, and even violence. The loudness of sound is only one factor in determining its impact. High environmental noise levels can lead to physiological and psychological problems, such as reduced concentration, difficulty in speech communication, irritation, nausea, headaches, and overall discomfort. The journal *Noise and Health* reviews in detail how noise affects both the body and the mind, showing that its health impacts are widespread and serious.

Noise also affects people's well-being in subtle ways. Since noise is essentially any unwanted sound that disrupts human rest or activity, even small amounts can have negative effects. However, tolerance depends on perception. For instance, the sound of rainfall is generally accepted, while the steady dripping of a leaking tap is often irritating. Typically, periodic or repetitive sounds are more disturbing than irregular ones.

The broader issue of urban pollution- including noise- is becoming a critical challenge in cities of all sizes. Environmental conditions are deteriorating, and while anti-pollution laws exist, they are often ignored rather than enforced. Stronger implementation of laws is essential, but equally important is public education on civic responsibility, cleanliness, and awareness of pollution's dangers. Campaigns like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan can help strengthen the movement against pollution in India by promoting cleanliness and responsibility among citizens.

5.3.6 Urban Health Problems

The link between urbanization and health problems becomes clear when we look at real-life situations. When large numbers of poor people move to cities - often because of hunger or lack of employment in rural areas- the sudden population growth puts great pressure on urban infrastructure. Essential services such as housing, transport, clean water, sanitation, food supply, employment, and healthcare often become inadequate. As more people compete for limited jobs, wages may fall and unemployment may increase, affecting both new migrants and long-term urban residents. This decline in economic conditions can limit people's ability to afford or access healthcare services, which in turn leads to worsening health conditions and overall poorer health outcomes in urban areas. According to WHO, Almost 40% of urban dwellers have no access to safely managed sanitation services and many lack access to adequate drinking water and an estimated 91% of people in urban areas breathe polluted air and finally poorly designed urban transport systems create a range of threats including road traffic injuries, air and noise pollution and barriers to safe physical activity – all leading to higher levels of noncommunicable disease and injuries. Continued urbanization is expected to lead to cities becoming epicentres of disease transmission, including vector-borne diseases. Thus, the characteristics of urbanization- such as the speed, scale, and persistence of these changes, along with how communities and governments respond - can significantly influence the health of urban populations. These effects can occur regardless of city size, suggesting common pathways through which urbanization affects health.

The urban environment can be understood as the specific features of a city that shape health outcomes. It can be viewed in terms of three interconnected dimensions: the social environment, the physical environment, and the urban resource infrastructure. The social environment includes factors like prevailing social norms and attitudes, neighborhood socioeconomic status, and social capital (such as trust and community institutions). The physical environment encompasses the built environment, pollution levels, availability of

green spaces, transportation systems, and the city's geographic and climatic conditions. The urban resource infrastructure refers to the availability of health and social services, as well as municipal institutions like law enforcement. Importantly, these social, physical, and infrastructural characteristics are all influenced by broader municipal, national, and global trends and policies.

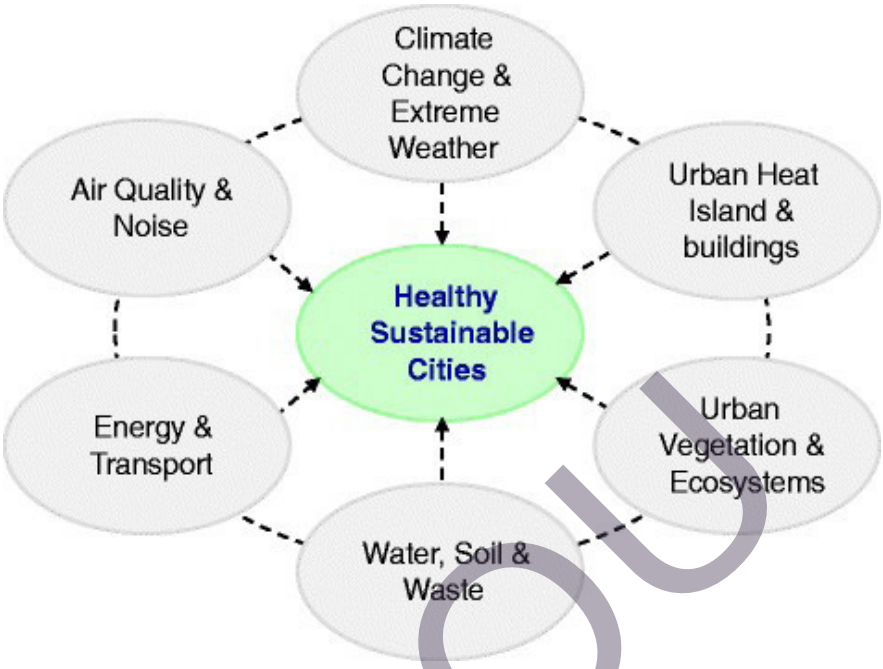

Fig 5.3.6 Social Determinants of Urban Health

The urban environment is linked to particular health problems, with varying levels of susceptibility among different socio-economic groups. When material priorities dominate urban development, public health can suffer despite organized health interventions, as illustrated by Calcutta's rapid expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries High disease and mortality rates in the city were directly tied to urban poverty, itself a product of economic competition that shaped housing and environmental conditions. In this way, economic growth can have detrimental effects, worsening poverty and reducing the health status of the urban poor. A similar situation was documented in Bombay where the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a surge in commercial activity and wealth creation, alongside massive immigration, overcrowding, declining wages, environmental degradation, and high mortality among the majority of residents. These cases reflect the "flawed, disruptive qualities of modernization and development."

Health issues related to urban poverty reveal a recognizable pattern . Historically, the leading causes of death in both rural and urban areas, especially among children, have been waterborne and foodborne intestinal diseases. More recently, however, respiratory diseases have emerged as a serious problem in major cities, with data from Bombay and Pune indicating rising mortality linked to industrial and commercial pollution. The negative effects of this pollution are intensified by poor living conditions, including overcrowded and damp housing, inadequate nutrition, and the use of cheap fuels that emit sulphurous waste. Calcutta's geo-medical profile, according to Hazra and Banerjee (1983), reflects poverty,

congestion, housing shortages, lack of amenities, and general environmental decline. In recent years, the city's disease profile has shifted, with a decrease in the prevalence of communicable diseases and a rise in illnesses linked to stress, anxiety, and the so-called "urban syndrome," accompanied by worsening air pollution.

Research by C.A.K. Yesudian (1981) on a major unnamed Indian metropolis shows that social inequality strongly influences access to healthcare. Economically disadvantaged groups—who have the greatest need—often lack access due to their inability to afford private care, limited awareness of hygiene and diseases, and insufficient knowledge about available public health services. These conclusions are reinforced by A. Tragler's (1985) survey of Bombay slum households, which revealed generally poor health, limited awareness of health problems, and underutilization of public sector health facilities. The unhealthy living conditions in slums, driven by poverty and poor sanitation, are a key cause of illness. Addressing these issues effectively requires an integrated health system that meets the basic needs of the urban poor.

Illness itself is a relative concept, as demonstrated by S.C. Gupta's (1984) study of Ludhiana slum dwellers. While upper-class individuals often define illness as feeling unwell, middle- and lower-class residents tend to associate it with being unable to work. However, social class does not appear to significantly affect how quickly people seek medical treatment.

5.3.7 Issues of Waste Management in India

Urban India faces a serious and growing waste management problem due to rapid urbanization, population growth, and changing patterns of consumption. Cities generate large quantities of solid waste every day, including household garbage, plastic waste, electronic waste, and construction debris. In many urban areas, waste collection and segregation systems are inadequate, leading to the accumulation of garbage in open spaces, drains, and water bodies. Improper disposal of waste contributes to environmental pollution, blocks drainage systems, and increases the risk of flooding, especially during the monsoon season. It also creates serious health hazards by encouraging the spread of diseases through pests and contaminated water. Although initiatives such as solid waste management rules and recycling programs have been introduced, poor implementation and lack of public participation remain major challenges. Addressing the urban waste problem in India requires improved infrastructure, effective policy enforcement, and greater public awareness about waste reduction and segregation. The waste management system in India is broadly divided into four categories: municipal waste, industrial waste, biomedical waste, and electronic waste. Each of these categories is regulated by separate laws and policies due to the distinct nature of the waste they generate. Waste management practices in India include processes such as waste generation, storage, collection at both primary and secondary levels, transportation, recycling, treatment, and final disposal. A larger proportion of Indian cities mainly follow the strategy of centralized composting for biodegradable waste, which often follows the procedure of transporting an entire city's waste to a particular facility. However, this process often results in the mixing up of bio-degradable and non-biodegradable waste leading to functional breakage of the system .

In Indian cities, municipal corporations play a key role in sanitation and waste management, working closely with public health authorities. The municipal corporation is generally responsible for the collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW).

Sanitation-related functions such as street cleaning, drainage maintenance, vector control, and disease prevention are usually carried out through the public health or health wing of the corporation, in coordination with state health departments.

Administratively, the municipal corporation follows a dual structure comprising elected representatives and appointed officials. The mayor, elected from among the councillors, serves as the ceremonial head of the corporation; however, the term of the mayor varies by state and is often one year or less, not uniformly five years. Executive authority is vested in the Municipal Commissioner, who is usually a state-appointed civil servant. The Commissioner oversees the day-to-day administration and is supported by senior officers such as Additional or Deputy Commissioners and departmental heads. Departments under the municipal corporation typically include public health, sanitation, water supply, public works, town planning, revenue, and street lighting. The public health department includes medical officers, health officers, sanitary inspectors, food safety officers, supervisors, and sanitation workers, who together are responsible for maintaining urban hygiene, controlling epidemics, and ensuring food and environmental safety.

Fig 5.3.7 Waste Management in India

Solid waste management (SWM) operations are carried out under four main activities: street cleansing, waste collection, transportation, and disposal. The public health department manages cleansing and collection, while the transportation department handles the movement and disposal of waste. For efficiency, cities are divided into zones, which are further split into sanitary wards to streamline collection and transport.

In practice, waste management in India largely involves collecting waste from residential and industrial areas and dumping it in landfills. Municipal authorities are tasked with managing solid waste within their jurisdictions, but the prevailing method is limited to lifting waste from its source and transporting it to dumping grounds.

Treatment at these sites is minimal, usually restricted to spreading waste across larger areas to keep it out of public view. Waste collection itself is often outsourced, with ragpickers, small contractors, and municipal staff commonly involved in the process.

In India, waste collection is primarily managed by city municipalities. Studies conducted to analyze the status of MSWM in India found that mismanagement of MSW is severe and it is one of the major reasons for environment problems faced by Indian cities . However, waste is usually collected in a mixed form without proper segregation of biodegradable matter, plastics, glass, paper, and other materials. It was found that most of the Indian cities are practicing unscientific disposal of MSW. It is reported that; the total amount of generated MSW is not proportional to the amount of MSW reaching the designated treatment facility. The major share of MSW generated are being deposited in city suburbs, roadsides, drainage systems, low lying areas and in green covers of the cities The collected waste is typically transported and dumped on the outskirts of cities. Alongside municipal efforts, local *raddiwalas* or *kabadiwalas* (rag pickers) also play a key role by collecting small iron pieces with magnets, gathering glass bottles, and collecting paper for recycling. In Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) uses more advanced vehicles under the Delhi Waste Management (DWM) system.

Street sweepers are employed in every city for both street cleaning and primary waste collection. Each sweeper is responsible for maintaining cleanliness in a designated area, usually a street with its adjoining lanes. Domestic waste is often disposed of directly onto streets or in plastic bags, from where sweepers gather it into small heaps. This waste is then transferred by handcarts to nearby open dumps or collection bins, or taken directly by tractor trolleys to city outskirts. Sweepers use basic tools such as brooms, spades (*favda*), small rakes (*panji*), pointed spades (*gayti*), handcarts, and buckets. Waste from street cleaning is collected in wheelbarrows and then deposited into roadside bins or open dumps, along with household waste.

From these collection points, municipal workers load the waste into vehicles like tractors, bullock carts, or refuse collectors for transportation to final disposal sites. In some cases, workers still use traditional wooden baskets (*chabra*) to transfer waste manually into vehicles. Generally, bullock carts make one or two trips a day, tractors make two to three trips, while dumper trucks and refuse collectors may complete up to four trips daily.

Recycling and reuse form an important part of waste management in India. The recycling industry handles materials such as paper, plastics, glass, and metals. Many cities have also developed into recycling hubs, attracting recyclable waste from surrounding towns and villages. Recycling is well rooted in Indian society, not only because of traditional practices but also due to socio-economic conditions that encourage reuse. However, recycling cannot address all types of waste, as certain materials either lack safe or cost-effective recycling technologies.

The recycling sector in India operates through both formal and informal systems. The informal segment includes rag pickers, dump pickers, itinerant waste buyers, and small traders, while the organized sector consists of large traders, wholesalers, and manufacturers. Together, they form a significant part of the country's waste recycling network, even though challenges remain in achieving comprehensive waste management.

5.3.7.1 Waste Management Initiatives in India

In recent years, solid waste management in India has gained significant attention from the Central and State Governments as well as municipal authorities. To address the growing challenge, a variety of partnerships and alliances have been developed in urban areas. These collaborations exist in differentplayers , including public-private, public-community, and private-private and cooperatives To understand these partnerships, it is important to identify the key stakeholders involved in the waste management sector.

The actors in waste management can be broadly classified into four groups. The public sector includes local authorities and public departments operating at the city level. The private-formal sector consists of registered enterprises, both large and small, engaged in collection, transportation, treatment, disposal, and recycling of waste. The private-informal sector refers to unrecognized players such as rag pickers, dump pickers, itinerant waste buyers, traders, and small unregistered enterprises. Lastly, community representatives, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), also play a vital role in waste management activities.

These stakeholders collaborate through various forms of partnerships. Public-private partnerships involve local authorities working with private enterprises, while public-community arrangements bring together local authorities and NGOs. In addition, private-private partnerships exist among informal waste pickers, traders, dealers, and recycling enterprises, both small and large. A broader form of collaboration is the public-private-community partnership, which combines the efforts of local authorities, private companies, and NGOs to improve solid waste management.

At the national level, the National Solid Waste Association of India (NSWAI) plays a key role. Established on January 25, 1996, NSWAI is a leading professional non-profit organization working in the field of solid waste management, including hazardous, toxic, and biomedical waste. It assists the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), New Delhi, in policy formulation and action planning. The association also collects and compiles data on waste management from municipalities in Class-I cities (with populations over 100,000) and Class-II cities (with populations above 50,000). This information is then shared on its website and linked to national and international networks.

NSWAI is also a member of the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Through this membership, it provides a platform for sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices in waste management at both national and international levels, strengthening India's approach to addressing waste-related challenges.

The regulatory framework for waste management in India includes several government initiatives and legal provisions. Important programs include the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small & Medium Towns (UIDSSMT). In addition, specific rules such as the Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules (1999), later amended as the Plastics Manufacture and Usage (Amendment) Rules (2003), the Draft Guidelines for Sanitation in Slaughter Houses (1998) issued by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Ordinance, 2006, and the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000 form part of the legal framework. At the national level, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) plays

a key role in legislating policies, including the Municipal Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules, 2000, which lay down the responsibilities of municipalities in handling urban waste.

Several committees and task forces have also shaped India's waste management policies. These include the Shukla Committee Report (2000), the Burman Committee Report (1999) appointed by the Supreme Court, and the National Plastic Waste Management Task Force Report (1997). To assess sanitation levels in Indian cities, the Ministry of Urban Development launched a National Rating and Award Scheme for Sanitation in Indian Cities, the details of which are available on the ministry's website. In 2008, the Government of India introduced the National Urban Sanitation Policy (NUSP), encouraging states to design their own sanitation strategies to meet local challenges.

One of the earliest significant initiatives was led by the Supreme Court of India in 1998, which appointed an expert committee to review the status of solid waste management (SWM) in Indian cities. The committee identified major gaps and produced an Interim Report in 1999. Following its recommendations, and under the Environment Protection Act of 1986, the MoEF issued the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules in 2000. These rules make it mandatory for municipal authorities to manage collection, segregation, transportation, processing, and disposal of solid waste within their jurisdiction. Municipalities are also required to submit annual reports to either the Department of Urban Development in metropolitan cities or the District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner in smaller towns.

As of September 2009, the National Solid Waste Association of India (NSWAI) reported over 300 ongoing projects across the country related to waste and environmental management. In addition, the CPCB, in collaboration with the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, carried out a survey of 59 cities, including 35 metro cities, to evaluate compliance with the 2000 SWM Rules. The findings showed that only seven cities had implemented house-to-house waste collection and segregation, 11 had privatized waste transportation, and 15 had established waste processing facilities. These included ten composting plants (one with energy recovery), four vermi-composting plants, and one pelletisation and energy recovery facility.

Hospital waste management has also received attention. The Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 made it mandatory for hospitals, clinics, veterinary institutions, and other medical facilities to manage biomedical waste responsibly. Before this, the disposal of such waste was the responsibility of municipal authorities, often leading to unsafe mixing of infectious and non-infectious waste. The rules now ensure systematic collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal of biomedical waste as part of hospital hygiene and maintenance.

A notable example of innovation in waste management is the Delhi Waste Management (DWM) initiative. Established in 2004 as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, DWM is responsible for the collection, segregation, and transportation of municipal waste to landfill sites. This project employs over 1,000 workers and represents a step toward more organized and systematic waste management practices in India. Another significant initiative is from Kerala; Haritha Karma Sena is a community-based waste management initiative launched by the Government of Kerala under the Suchitwa Mission to strengthen decentralized solid waste management at the local level.

Comprising trained women workers engaged through local self-government institutions, Haritha Karma Sena plays a vital role in door-to-door collection of non-biodegradable waste from households, shops, and institutions. The collected waste is scientifically segregated and transported to material collection facilities or recycling units, thereby reducing the burden on landfills and preventing environmental pollution. In addition to waste collection, the Haritha Karma Sena contributes to public awareness by educating citizens on waste segregation at source, reduction of plastic use, and responsible disposal practices. Through its integration with local governance and emphasis on community participation, the initiative has emerged as a key pillar of Kerala's sustainable and people-centered waste management system.

5.3.7.2 Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission)

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) is a nationwide sanitation and cleanliness programme launched by the Government of India on 2 October 2014, in line with Mahatma Gandhi's vision of a clean and healthy nation. The mission seeks to improve public health and environmental quality by addressing issues related to sanitation, hygiene, and waste management across the country. Its key objectives include the elimination of open defecation, expansion of access to household, community, and public toilets, effective management of solid and liquid waste, and the promotion of cleanliness as a shared social responsibility. To address the distinct needs of different regions, the mission is implemented through two components: Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).

In urban areas, the Swachh Bharat Mission focuses on eliminating open defecation, converting insanitary toilets into sanitary ones, eradicating manual scavenging, and strengthening municipal solid waste management systems. The programme covers thousands of towns and cities and involves the construction of individual household toilets, community toilets in densely populated settlements, and public toilets at locations such as markets, transport terminals, and tourist centres. Financial assistance for these initiatives is shared between the Central and State Governments, with special provisions for North Eastern and special category states. Urban local bodies are encouraged to mobilise additional resources to support implementation, while substantial public funding is allocated for waste management infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and awareness campaigns.

Building on earlier achievements, Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0 aims to make all cities garbage-free and ensure safe management of wastewater and fecal sludge. It emphasizes segregation of waste at source, adoption of the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle, scientific processing of all categories of municipal solid waste, and remediation of legacy dumpsites. The mission also introduces wastewater treatment as a key component in smaller urban local bodies and continues to strengthen sanitation infrastructure, information and education campaigns, and capacity-building efforts. Urban areas are encouraged to achieve certifications such as ODF+, ODF++, Water+, and star ratings under the garbage-free city framework.

In rural India, the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) replaced the earlier Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan and was launched with the goal of making villages open defecation free through toilet construction, solid and liquid waste management, and sustained behavioural change at the community level. Financial incentives were provided to eligible households for constructing individual household latrines, with cost-sharing

arrangements between the Centre and the States. By October 2019, all districts in the country declared themselves open defecation free, marking a major milestone. SBM (Gramin) Phase II continues this effort by focusing on sustaining ODF status and achieving comprehensive village cleanliness (Sampoorn Swachhata) through convergence with other development programmes.

A key strength of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan lies in its emphasis on behavioural change and public participation. The mission promotes scientific and sustainable waste management practices, including door-to-door waste collection, decentralised processing, composting of biodegradable waste, and safe disposal of non-recyclable materials. Awareness campaigns encourage citizens to segregate waste at source, reduce waste generation, avoid single-use plastics, and maintain cleanliness in public spaces. Supporting initiatives such as the Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan, which ensures functional toilets in schools, and the Rashtriya Swachhata Kosh, which mobilises public and corporate contributions, further strengthen the mission. Together, these efforts have significantly improved sanitation coverage, waste management practices, and public awareness, contributing to better health and environmental conditions across India.

5.3.7.3 Waste Management in Private Sector

Several private companies in India are actively offering complete solutions for waste management. One such organization is Subhash Projects and Marketing Limited (SPML), a leading engineering and infrastructure development company with over 26 years of experience in sectors like water, power, and urban infrastructure. SPML has expanded its operations in solid waste management, wastewater systems, cross-country pipelines, ports, and special economic zones (SEZs), often through BOOT (Build-Own-Operate-Transfer) and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models.

The company operates through its environmental arm, SPML Enviro, which specializes in integrated environmental solutions. Its services include the collection, transportation, and disposal of municipal and hazardous waste, segregation and recycling, construction and management of sanitary landfills, and setting up composting and waste-to-energy plants. Notably, it has implemented waste-to-energy projects at Delhi and Hyderabad airports. SPML Enviro has also invested in resources and partnerships to provide both solid and water treatment solutions, covering municipal, industrial, and medical waste.

To strengthen its capabilities, SPML Enviro has collaborated with PEAT International, a North Illinois-based waste-to-resources company in the USA. PEAT uses its proprietary Plasma Thermal Destruction Recovery (PTDR) technology, which is an eco-friendly process that converts waste into non-toxic synthetic gas, a valuable alternative energy source, along with other useful by-products. This technology is cost-effective, environmentally safe, and commercially viable, making it a significant advancement in waste remediation.

SPML Enviro, together with its joint-venture partners, has successfully executed several turnkey projects. These include the Okhla sewage treatment plant for Delhi Jal Board, the Bewana and Okhla common effluent treatment plants for the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation, the Yelahanka sewage treatment plant for the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, and the Mysore sewage treatment project for the Karnataka Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

In addition, SPML has partnered with INSITUFORM Technologies Inc., USA, a global leader in sewer rehabilitation.

INSITUFORM introduced the innovative "No Dig Technology", which allows sewer rehabilitation without replacing old pipes. Using a "pipe within a pipe" method, a liner is inserted into the existing sewer line, effectively renewing it without the need for excavation.

5.3.7.4 Waste Management and Indian Corporate

In India, many corporations have launched their own initiatives to promote responsible waste management. HCL Infosystems, for instance, believes that producers of electronic goods must ensure environmentally friendly disposal once a product reaches the end of its life cycle. The company supports the development of separate legislation for e-waste in India and has introduced a convenient program for safe recycling. HCL has created an online platform where both individual and corporate customers can register requests for e-waste disposal. To expand its reach, the company has also extended this service to retail customers through its nationwide HCL Touch centers. Importantly, the facility is available to all users regardless of when or where the product was purchased.

Another example is Nokia India, which launched the *"Take Back"* campaign to promote recycling of old mobile devices. Under this initiative, customers can drop their used phones and accessories—such as chargers and batteries—into recycling bins placed at Nokia Priority Dealers and Nokia Care Centers. The campaign is designed to raise awareness about the importance of e-waste recycling and even offers gifts as an incentive to encourage participation, while also accepting devices from any brand.

ITC Limited has also made waste management and environmental sustainability central to its corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda. The company focuses on energy management, waste management, and social and farm forestry. Among its efforts are recycling and reuse processes, such as utilizing paper mill backwater for pulp dilution and reusing clarifier outlet water from paper machines for various purposes. These examples highlight how Indian corporations are increasingly playing an active role in addressing waste management challenges, showing commitment not only to business growth but also to environmental responsibility.

5.3.7.5 Challenges

Waste management in India faces several challenges, such as inadequate collection and segregation at source, shortage of land for waste disposal, unregulated dumping of e-waste, and a general lack of public awareness. In many developing countries, including India, mixed waste is often dumped without treatment because advanced technologies used in developed nations are too expensive to adopt. Although the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules of 2000, implemented in January 2004, were intended to improve the system, waste is still managed in a linear fashion—merely collected and dumped—creating both environmental and health hazards. With urban populations rising, India is expected to face an even larger waste disposal crisis unless a new, holistic approach is adopted. Waste should be seen not just as rubbish to be discarded but as a resource that can generate livelihoods and benefit the environment through composting and recycling.

Private sector participation in waste management has often been seen as a potential solution, but it also comes with risks such as lack of transparency, commercial failure, or poor cooperation among stakeholders. Questions remain about the effectiveness of public-private partnerships (PPPs). For instance, the partnership between the Chennai municipal

corporation and the French company Onyx focused mainly on garbage collection, but it received criticism for charging high costs while simply dumping waste at disposal sites. True progress requires stronger policies that clearly define responsibilities and ensure that private companies focus on composting and recycling instead of just dumping waste.

Although multiple policy responses have emerged in recent years, sustainable solutions for managing both organic and inorganic waste remain limited. Recycling is one of the most practical and cost-effective options, especially in developing countries, as it generates employment for unskilled urban poor with minimal investment. Yet, most policies address recycling only superficially, without creating a comprehensive framework to make it effective. Issues like industry responsibility, sustainable packaging, and large-scale waste reduction strategies have not been adequately addressed. Recycling in India continues to focus mainly on plastics, paper, and metals, while newer packaging materials are often left out due to the limitations of low-end recycling technologies. Additionally, waste pickers and workers face poor occupational safety conditions, which remain a critical concern.

In recent years, expensive and unsuitable technologies have been promoted in India to manage urban waste, often ignoring their environmental and social implications. Methods like incineration, gasification, pyrolysis, and pelletisation are not well suited to Indian waste, which lacks the calorific value required for efficient energy recovery. These systems often need auxiliary fuel to function and expose communities to environmental risks. Developed nations, including the United States, have largely phased out such technologies due to high costs and stringent emission standards, yet developing countries like India are increasingly targeted as markets for these outdated solutions. This makes it essential for India to carefully evaluate technologies and focus instead on sustainable, context-appropriate waste management practices.

5.3.7.6 Suggestions for Future Improvement

Effective solid waste management in India requires strong political will and long-term planning, but government bodies and municipalities often prioritize immediate concerns over future environmental issues. Since environmental initiatives rarely bring political gains, authorities tend to delay action. To overcome this mindset, sustainable solutions must be backed by legislation, strict enforcement, and region-specific planning frameworks.

A successful system should begin with segregation of waste at the source. Providing households with standard bins or centralized collection points can simplify storage and disposal, while community cooperation and public participation are essential. Awareness campaigns and sensitization programs can change attitudes toward waste, encouraging segregation and reducing littering. Examples from places like West Bengal show that citizen-led initiatives can create cleaner cities when residents adopt responsible practices.

Waste management cannot rely solely on sanitary landfills, as land is scarce and poorly managed dumping sites worsen environmental damage. Instead, recycling, composting, and newer techniques for reusing plastics should be promoted. Partnerships between municipalities, private operators, NGOs, and the informal sector can help achieve better collection and recycling. Public-private-community models, micro-enterprises, and cooperatives, such as those led by SEWA and EXNORA, highlight how organized efforts can both improve waste management and uplift the livelihoods of waste pickers. For long-term efficiency, India needs decentralized schemes, user-fee-based

systems like "Swaccha Bangalore," and private sector participation. Training at all levels, from households to municipal authorities, is crucial to strengthen technical capacity.

In conclusion, a sustainable approach to waste management requires the adoption of a cradle-to-grave framework in which responsibility is shared among all stakeholders, including manufacturers, consumers, recyclers, municipalities, and the wider community. With effective planning, adequate financial support, and positive attitudinal change, waste can be transformed from a serious environmental burden into a valuable resource. Such an approach helps reduce health risks, generate employment opportunities, and protect the natural environment. At the social level, it is essential to instill a sense of responsibility among citizens by promoting the principle of "My Waste, My Responsibility," which emphasizes individual and collective accountability for sustainable waste management.

Recap

- The environment refers to the surrounding conditions, objects, or circumstances that influence humans, animals, plants, or other entities.
- Urban pollution, which refers to pollution found in towns and cities, arises from a wide range of sources.
- A misconnection occurs when a building's drainage system is linked to the wrong sewage network.
- Phosphate is an essential nutrient, but when present in excessive amounts in rivers and lakes, it can trigger excessive plant and algae growth.
- Air pollution refers to the contamination of the atmosphere with harmful gases and fine particles of solid or liquid matter (particulates) present in concentrations that pose risks to human health.
- Air pollution harms humans, animals, and plants worldwide. Each breath we take introduces harmful pollutants into our bodies.
- In urban settings, stormwater flows into drainage systems and eventually into rivers and lakes.
- A common problem is the dumping of household waste directly into water bodies like rivers, lakes, streams, and seas.
- Industrial activities, particularly those involving manufacturing and chemical processes, are major contributors to water pollution.

- Noise is considered a form of pollution mainly because of its impact on health.
- Noise is measured in decibels (dB), which indicate the intensity of sound or the size of the air pressure fluctuations caused by sound waves.
- The broader issue of urban pollution—including noise—is becoming a critical challenge in cities of all sizes.
- The waste management system in India is broadly divided into four categories: municipal waste, industrial waste, biomedical waste, and electronic waste.
- Recycling and reuse form an important part of waste management in India.
- NSWAI is also a member of the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), based in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Private sector participation in waste management has often been seen as a potential solution, but it also comes with risks such as lack of transparency, commercial failure, or poor cooperation among stakeholders.
- Effective solid waste management in India requires strong political will and long-term planning.

Objective Questions

1. What percentage of India's total population lived in urban areas in 2001?
2. How many metropolitan cities (population over one million) did India have in 2001?
3. Which city led the newly designated metropolitan areas in population growth rate between 1991and2001?
4. By how much can urban areas be hotter than surrounding rural areas due to the urban heat islandeffect?
5. What is the main cause of reduced groundwater recharge in expanding urban areas?
6. The waste management system in India is broadly divided into how many categories?

7. Who is primarily responsible for handling municipal solid waste (MSW) in Indian cities?

8. Which four main activities form part of solid waste management (SWM) operations?

9. Which organization was established in 1996 to assist in waste management policy formulation in India?

10. Which Supreme Court-appointed committee report in 1999 reviewed solid waste management in India?

11. What innovative technology was introduced by INSITUFORM for sewer rehabilitation?

12. Which company launched the "Take Back" campaign for mobile phone recycling in India?

Answers

1. 27.8%.
2. 35.
3. Surat (85% increase).
4. About 6–8°F (3.5–4.5°C).
5. Increase in impervious surfaces such as roads and buildings.
6. Four
7. Municipal Corporation
8. Street Cleansing, Waste Collection, Transportation, Disposal
9. NSWAI
10. Burman Committee Report
11. No Dig Technology
12. Nokia India

Assignments

1. Discuss how rapid urbanization in India has affected environmental quality, with specific reference to air, water, and temperature changes.
2. Examine the social and health impacts of urban poverty and inadequate infrastructure in major Indian cities.
3. Critically analyze the concept of the urban heat island effect and its relationship with climate change in the context of Indian metropolitan areas.
4. Discuss the role of different stakeholders (public, private, informal sector, and community representatives) in India's waste management system. Provide examples.
5. Analyze the challenges of waste management in India and suggest sustainable solutions suitable for urban areas.
6. Compare the contributions of private companies like SPML Enviro, HCL Infosystems, and ITC Limited in improving waste management practices in India.

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BLOCK

Urban Policy and Planning in India

UNIT 1

Urban Ecology: Definitions and Processes

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the meaning, scope and evolution of urban policy and urban planning in India
- examine the role of managing urban growth, infrastructure and sustainability
- describe the nature and trends of urban development in India

Prerequisite

Urban policy in India plays a crucial role in shaping the growth and development of cities by addressing key challenges such as infrastructure, housing, transportation, and environmental sustainability. Various types of urban policies, including housing, transport, environmental, and economic policies, aim to enhance the quality of urban life. Programs like the Smart Cities Mission, JNNURM, AMRUT, and PMAY have been implemented to improve urban governance, infrastructure, and housing. However, challenges such as rapid urbanisation, inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, and governance inefficiencies continue to hinder their effectiveness. Issues like slum expansion, traffic congestion, pollution, and lack of coordination among government agencies further complicate urban development. To overcome these challenges, there is a need for integrated and well-coordinated urban policies, increased investment in sustainable infrastructure, and active citizen participation. Strengthening urban governance, leveraging technology, and adopting innovative solutions can help create more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cities in India.

Keywords

Policy, Planning, Five year plan, Urban development

Discussion

Urban development is a state subject in the Indian federal system. There is no National Urban Policy; however, according to the National Urban Policy Framework 2018 different form of focus areas, schemes, programmes, and sectoral policies on various aspects of urban development are included. These include the National Urban Housing Policy, National Urban Transport Policy, National Urban Sanitation Policy, and National Policy for Street Vendors, along with programmes like the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission and urban sector missions of the Government of India, initiated after 2015. It is imperative to gather proper feedback from such initiatives to strengthen the National Urban Policy and address existing demands as soon as possible. During this time, major programmes were planned for rural areas because most of the poor population resided there.

The rural areas also lacked primary infrastructure for a good standard of living. In a democratic setup, the politics had to be attended to by most of the population. Although urban areas were not particularly favourable, the Government managed urban affairs almost in the same manner as it had during the pre-independence era. However, the scope of the activities of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) was expanded. All urban problems fell within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply, which was formed on 13th May 1952; it was later renamed the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, a nodal ministry for urban development. By the mid-1980s, new cities had sprung up in great numbers, while the older ones were experiencing chaotic conditions in delivering even the most basic services to citizens. ULBs were largely ignored by the responsible state governments. However, a political consensus began to emerge regarding the issues of urban administration, which warranted serious consideration. For the first time in 1985, a ministry with the title Urban Development was constituted in the Government of India. Some specific interventions during this phase included granting constitutional status to ULBs. This phase began in line with the actual output of pro-globalisation and liberalisation efforts of 1990, which stimulated economic activity and a complementary rise in urbanisation. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 empowered urban local bodies, providing incentives for good policy initiatives. The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was initiated in 2005, described as the first significant push for urban governance reform and the upgrading of key service delivery. This was succeeded by other significant programmes such as the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). In 2018, the Union Government developed a National Urban Policy Framework (NUPF) for a holistic and integrated approach to the future of urban planning in India.

6.1.1 Planning for Towns and Cities

Town planning was an important area of concern in pre-British India, characterised by strong settlement planning principles that laid the foundation for the town and country planning process. The British administration also focused on techniques and solutions to the municipal problem of maintaining sanitary conditions in towns. To address this, they constituted Town Improvement Committees, Boards, and Sanitary Commissions in various cities across India. Patrick Geddes, a renowned town planner invited to the Madras Presidency in 1915, noted that "Town Planning is not mere

place-planning, nor even work-planning. If it is to be successful, it must be folk-planning."

Several steps were taken by the Government of India immediately after independence. A conference of Improvement Trusts held in 1948 recommended that all towns with a population above 10,000 should be equipped with master plans, and all the schemes of the Trusts should fall within the ambit of these master plans. In 1960, the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO) passed a model Town and Country Planning law, which led to various state-level acts for urban planning in the early 1960s. During the Third Five-Year Plan, the Union Government fully funded the states to establish Town and Country Planning Departments, which prepared master plans.

Implementation of central and state sector schemes, development control, and planning permissions followed. The model law was altered in 1985, suggesting that planning and plan implementation should be handled by the same agency. Development Authorities (DAs) are significant institutions assigned to the development of areas beyond the geographical limits of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), which are in transition phases or are expected to become urbanisable in the future. For instance, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has a jurisdiction of 741 sq. km, whereas the Bangalore Development Authority, established in 1976 to make Bengaluru a desirable place worldwide, has a jurisdiction of 1,207 sq. km. These DAs are statutory bodies that prepare the master plan and plan for land development and urban infrastructure creation, which will later be transferred to the relevant ULB. The schemes differ from state to state; for instance, Uttar Pradesh has city governments such as the Lucknow Development Authority and Kanpur Development Authority, while the Haryana Urban Development Authority exists in Haryana.

Metropolitan cities such as Mumbai and Bengaluru have established the Metropolitan Region Development Authority, recognising that major cities are traversed by a significant population for work and residence. Therefore, it is crucial that futuristic planning is executed.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority was established in 1975, while the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA) was constituted in 1985. BMRDA maintains an area of more than 8,000 sq. km. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act added economic and social planning to the 12th Schedule, thus assigning this task to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), District Planning Committees (DPCs), and Metropolitan Planning Committees. In the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), and currently under the Smart Cities Programme and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, the task of preparing a City Development Plan with a vision for the town or city has been assigned to the ULBs. Due to inadequacies at the ULB level, most ULBs hired external expert agencies during the JNNURM, which were empanelled by the Government of India. There has been significant improvement in preparing plans for the schemes and missions.

6.1.2 Review of Urban Policies through Five-Year Plans

Urban policies and programmes in India have played a pivotal role in shaping the development and management of cities and urban areas across the country. The First Five-Year Plan primarily focused on housing and the rehabilitation of refugees, leading to the establishment of the Town and Country Planning Organisation to provide assistance to the Central and State governments and to frame a capital-based master plan for Delhi. The Second Plan also concentrated

on preparing master plans and regional plans. The Third Plan emphasised balanced regional development and rural-urban linkages. Guidelines for a comprehensive urban land policy were developed during the fourth plan period for the State governments. The Fifth Plan addressed the growth of small and medium towns as well as the challenges faced by metro cities. A draft National Urban Policy was introduced as a partial outlook for urban development. An Integrated Urban Development Programme was introduced during the Fifth Plan period for infrastructure development. The Sixth Plan aimed to develop small and medium towns and provide basic services to the urban poor, with the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) enforced at this time. The Seventh Plan was influenced by the tentative steps towards economic liberalisation, attracting private finance, especially in housing. The Eighth Plan period was strongly committed to the concept of sustainable cities, with the prime objective of strengthening metropolitan cities and small and medium towns. The Ninth Plan aimed to develop urban areas into economically viable, equitable, sustainable, and efficient regions. The Tenth Plan announced scientific and systematic changes to accelerate urban governance reforms, intended to promote the renovation of legislative, functional, and administrative structures of urban local governments. Here is an overview of the major flagship programme for urban development following the Tenth Plan.

1. **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):** The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is one of the largest housing programmes in the world, aiming to ensure "Housing for All." The scheme targets the construction of around 3 crore pucca houses across India, covering both urban and rural populations. Under PMAY–Urban (PMAY-U), approximately 1.2 crore houses are sanctioned for economically weaker sections (EWS), lower income groups (LIG), and middle income groups (MIG). PMAY-U operates through four verticals: in-situ slum redevelopment, which focuses on improving the living conditions of slum dwellers; the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS), which provides interest subsidies on housing loans; Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), involving collaboration between the government and private developers; and Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC), supporting individual households to build or enhance their own homes. Financial assistance under PMAY-U ranges from Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 2.67 lakh per house, depending on the vertical. By 2024, over 1.15 crore houses had been sanctioned under PMAY-U, reflecting its wide urban reach.

In rural areas, PMAY–Gramin (PMAY-G) targets nearly 2.95 crore houses, replacing kutcha houses with durable pucca structures. Each rural beneficiary receives Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain areas and Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly, difficult, and North-Eastern regions, along with 90 to 95 days of wage employment under MGNREGA. A key achievement of PMAY is its strong focus on social inclusion. More than 70% of houses are allotted to women, either individually or jointly. The scheme also prioritises Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens. Additionally, PMAY promotes eco-friendly, disaster-resistant, and cost-effective construction technologies, helping to reduce environmental impact and improve housing safety. Overall, PMAY has significantly strengthened housing security, reduced homelessness, and improved living standards across India through fact-based, large-scale intervention.

2. **Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM):** Although now replaced by schemes like AMRUT, JNNURM laid the groundwork for urban housing policies. It focused on modernising urban infrastructure and ensuring housing for marginalised groups. Two important sub-missions—Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) worked towards constructing homes and improving basic amenities in urban slums.

3. **Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY):** This programme aimed at creating a slum-free India by focusing on slum dwellers and integrating these areas into planned urban sectors. Under RAY, slums were provided with better housing, healthcare, sanitation, and education opportunities, helping to reduce the economic and social divide in urban regions. The policy also sought to confer land titles to slum residents.

4. **State-Level Housing Schemes:** Recognising the unique housing challenges in each state, several states introduced specific programmes. Kerala's LIFE Mission, for instance, aims to provide homes to the landless and homeless through convergence between multiple government schemes. These state-level initiatives tailor housing solutions to regional socio-economic and geographical contexts.

5. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** This model is extensively encouraged under programmes like PMAY-U to leverage the efficiency and resources of the private sector alongside government support. Developers are incentivised to construct affordable housing units, especially for economically weaker sections, thus bridging the gap between housing supply and demand.

6. **Rental Housing Policies:** To address the pressing need for affordable rental accommodation, particularly for migrant workers and the urban poor, the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) scheme was launched. Under this initiative, existing government-built housing is converted into rental units, and incentives are provided to private entities to build affordable rental complexes.

7. **Land Pooling Policies:** Land pooling facilitates the collection of small parcels of land owned by individuals into a larger parcel for systematic development. Once developed with roads, services, and infrastructure, the pooled land is redistributed, with landowners receiving plots of higher value. This policy promotes urban housing development without resorting to land acquisition.

8. **Technology-Driven Housing:** To meet the housing demands of rapid urbanisation, technologies such as prefabricated and modular construction methods are employed. These techniques reduce construction time and costs while promoting energy efficiency and sustainability, ensuring quicker delivery of quality housing.

9. **Subsidies and Incentives:** The Government offers financial subsidies on home loans through programmes like the Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS), part of PMAY. Homebuyers receive reduced interest rates, making homeownership more accessible. Developers are also incentivised to construct affordable homes with tax benefits and fast-tracked approvals.

10. **Slum Rehabilitation:** Slum rehabilitation aims to transform informal settlements

into livable communities. Policies under programmes like PMAY focus on relocating slum dwellers into formal housing with access to basic facilities such as clean water, electricity, healthcare, and education. These efforts provide shelter and enhance overall urban resilience and inclusivity.

6.1.2 Urban Development in India: Issues and Challenges of Urban Policies and Programmes

Although multiple urban policies and programmes aim to promote urban development in India, Indian cities continue to face significant challenges. According to the Census of India 2011, nearly 31.1% of India's population lives in urban areas, a figure projected to rise to 40% by 2036 (National Commission on Population). This rapid urban growth has placed immense pressure on housing, infrastructure, and the environment, limiting the effectiveness of urban development initiatives.

1. Housing Shortages

Urban housing policies such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) aim to provide affordable housing for all. However, the Technical Group on Urban Housing Shortage (MoHUA, 2012) estimated an urban housing shortage of 18.78 million units, largely affecting the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low-Income Groups (LIG). Rising land prices in urban areas significantly increase project costs, making affordable housing financially unviable. Moreover, complex approval and clearance procedures delay project implementation. As a result, many urban poor, including migrant workers, remain excluded from the formal housing market due to eligibility constraints and limited access to subsidies and institutional credit.

2. Infrastructure Deficiency

Urban infrastructure development programmes such as AMRUT focus on improving water supply, sewerage, and urban transport. However, the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) reports that only about 70% of the urban population has access to piped water supply, and less than 40% are connected to sewerage systems. Many Indian cities depend on outdated infrastructure incapable of supporting growing populations. Smaller cities and towns receive comparatively less funding than metropolitan areas, leading to uneven urban development. Poor maintenance further accelerates infrastructure deterioration.

3. Environmental Concerns

Rapid urbanisation in India has led to unplanned construction, loss of green cover, and increased pollution levels. According to the World Air Quality Report (2023), 14 of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India, highlighting the severity of urban environmental challenges. Although policies under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) seek to address these issues, weak enforcement and low public awareness limit their effectiveness. Urban areas face rising air and water pollution from industrial and vehicular emissions, while green spaces continue to shrink due to unchecked urban expansion.

4. Traffic and Transport

Urban transport initiatives, such as metro rail projects and Mass Rapid Transit Systems (MRTS), have improved mobility in some Indian cities but have not entirely alleviated traffic congestion. The absence of effective last-mile connectivity, poorly integrated public transport systems, and over-reliance on private vehicles continue to cause traffic bottlenecks, air pollution, and carbon emissions.

From the perspective of green city development, sustainable urban transport systems emphasise low-carbon mobility through public transport, non-motorised transport, and electric vehicles. However, the limited expansion of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, cycling lanes, and green transport corridors restricts progress towards environmentally sustainable cities. Moreover, the lack of urban safe zones, such as well-planned pedestrian areas, traffic-calmed streets, and road-safety measures, increases accident risks and reduces the inclusiveness of urban transport systems. Maintenance gaps and operational inefficiencies further weaken the effectiveness of urban transport initiatives.

5. Slum Rehabilitation

Slum rehabilitation programmes, like Rajiv Awas Yojana, aim to provide better housing for slum dwellers but often face community resistance. Forced relocations without proper resettlement plans can disrupt livelihoods and sever social ties, leaving families worse off. Additionally, poorly executed rehabilitation projects may result in substandard housing that lacks adequate facilities or long-term maintenance.

6. Funding and Financial Constraints

The successful implementation of urban programmes depends heavily on adequate and timely funding, which often remains insufficient. Many urban initiatives experience delays due to irregular fund allocation and excessive dependence on public-private partnerships. While private finance capital plays an important role in urban development, private investors are frequently reluctant to invest in low-return sectors such as affordable housing, public transport, and basic urban services.

This limited participation of private finance capital increases financial pressure on urban local bodies, which already face revenue constraints. As a result, urban development projects suffer from cost overruns, delayed execution, and uneven service delivery. Strengthening financial autonomy and improving mechanisms to attract responsible private capital are essential for sustainable urban development.

7. Urban Poverty and Employment

Despite initiatives like the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), urban poverty persists due to a lack of job opportunities and skill mismatches. While skill development programmes exist, they often fail to align with market demands, leaving many participants without meaningful employment. Additionally, outreach to marginalised and vulnerable groups remains limited, restricting their access to these programmes.

8. Sanitation and Waste Management

Programs like the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) have made strides in improving sanitation, but challenges remain. Inefficient waste segregation at the source and a lack of infrastructure for waste treatment lead to improper disposal methods, such as dumping in landfills. Urban slums face the worst sanitation issues, with many residents lacking access to clean water, functional toilets, and adequate waste management services.

9. Governance and Coordination

Overlapping responsibilities among municipal corporations, state governments, and central authorities often hinder the success of urban programmes. Poor inter-departmental coordination leads to delays, mismanagement, and fragmented development. Limited capacity and expertise among urban local bodies further complicate the execution of policies and programmes.

10. Disaster Preparedness

Cities are becoming increasingly vulnerable to floods, heatwaves, and earthquakes due to poor urban planning and unregulated construction. Disaster management policies often lack comprehensive preparedness strategies, focusing more on post-disaster response than on prevention and risk reduction. The absence of resilient infrastructure, such as efficient drainage systems and earthquake-resistant buildings, intensifies the impact of natural disasters.

In addition, disasters often contribute to a rise in urban crimes, including theft, vandalism, exploitation, and gender-based violence, particularly in overcrowded relief camps and poorly monitored urban spaces. Weak coordination among disaster response agencies and inadequate urban policing during emergencies further aggravate law-and-order challenges. Therefore, effective disaster preparedness must integrate urban safety measures, community policing, and crime-prevention mechanisms to ensure both physical security and social stability during disasters.

In conclusion, while India has implemented various urban policies and programmes to address the challenges of rapid urbanisation, several issues persist, including inadequate infrastructure, weak governance, environmental degradation, financial constraints, and social inequalities. The lack of coordination among government agencies, limited financial autonomy of urban local bodies, and bureaucratic inefficiencies further hinder effective policy implementation. Additionally, unplanned urban expansion, traffic congestion, pollution, and inadequate housing continue to impact the quality of life in cities. To create sustainable and inclusive urban spaces, there is a need for stronger governance, increased investment in infrastructure, efficient policy execution, and a greater focus on environmental and social sustainability. A holistic approach, integrating smart urban planning, participatory governance, and innovative solutions, will be essential for shaping resilient and livable cities in India.

Recap

- Five year plans progressively shifted focus from housing and infrastructure to sustainability and goverence reform.
- Post independence planning focused on master plans, regional planning and institutional frame work.
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) (2005) – The first large-scale urban governance and infrastructure reform initiative.
- Smart Cities Mission (SCM) & AMRUT (2015) Focused on modernising urban infrastructure and making cities sustainable.
- Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Aimed at improving sanitation and solid waste management.

- India's urban development evolved through master plans, Development Authorities, and reforms, with JNNURM, Smart Cities, and AMRUT improving infrastructure and governance.
- India's housing policies, led by PMAY, JNNURM, and RAY, focus on affordable housing, slum rehabilitation, and public-private partnerships for urban development.
- Urban planning in India has roots in pre- British settlement planning and colonical sanitary reforms.

Objective Questions

1. What is the main objective of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)?
2. Which programme preceded the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and focused on slum-free urban development?
3. Why is slum rehabilitation important?
4. What are Rental Housing Policies aimed at?
5. What is the role of the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM)?
6. What are the key components of sanitation and waste management?
7. What is disaster preparedness?
8. Which ministry is responsible for the implementation of PMAY in India?
9. Which government scheme focuses on providing social housing and urban sustainability?
10. What is the significance of community involvement in disaster preparedness?

Answers

1. Affordable housing for economically weaker sections.
2. Rajiv Awas Yojana.

3. It prevents slum expansion and improves quality of life.
4. It aims to support migrants, urban workers, and students in cities.
5. It focuses on skill development and employment opportunities.
6. It promotes the use of toilets and waste segregation.
7. It involves infrastructure resilience and community awareness.
8. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
9. Rajiv Awas Yojana.
10. It builds resilience and minimises the risks and impacts of disasters.

Assignments

1. Examine the role of Five year plans in shaping urban development policies in India.
2. Discuss the significance of National Urban Livelihood Mission.
3. Critically examine the key issues and challenges faced in the implementation of urban policies in India.
4. Trace the historical development of town planning in India.
5. Analyse major housing programmes in India.

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UNIT

Urban Planning

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the history and development of urban planning in India
- discuss the main factors, principles and process of urban planning
- identify different types of urban planning and their importance for sustainable cities

Prerequisite

Before understanding urban planning, it is essential to explore its fundamental concepts, historical evolution, and influencing factors. A basic knowledge of geography, demographics, economy, governance, and environmental sustainability helps in grasping the complexities of urban development. Understanding how population growth, migration, industrialisation, and technological advancements shape urban spaces is also crucial. Additionally, familiarity with India's historical urban settlements, from the Indus Valley Civilisation to British colonial towns, provides insights into how planning has evolved over time. Awareness of modern challenges like traffic congestion, pollution, informal settlements, and inadequate infrastructure further prepares learners to analyse and evaluate urban planning strategies effectively. This foundational knowledge enables a comprehensive understanding of the role of planning in building sustainable and liveable cities.

Keywords

Sustainability, Funtionality, Infrastructure, Envoronmental needs

Discussion

Urban planning is a multidisciplinary and forward-looking process that plays a crucial role in shaping the physical, social, and economic structure of cities and towns. It focuses on developing well-organised, efficient, and liveable urban spaces while effectively responding to the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation. Through the planned and optimal use of land, resources, and infrastructure, urban planning promotes sustainable, inclusive, and equitable urban development. Historically, urban planning has been central to human civilisation, evident in the grid-based settlements of ancient Mesopotamia and the advanced urban centres of the Indus Valley Civilisation. In the modern period, particularly during the Industrial Revolution, urban planning evolved as a response to unplanned urban expansion and deteriorating living conditions. Over time, its scope has expanded to incorporate environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and community participation, reinforcing its role in ensuring systematic, efficient, and resilient urban growth.

One of the central components of urban planning is land use planning, which involves zoning areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational purposes. This ensures the balanced development of urban areas and prevents overcrowding and environmental degradation. Urban planners also focus on housing policies to ensure affordable and adequate shelter for all sections of society, addressing issues such as slums and homelessness. Transportation is another critical aspect of urban planning. Developing efficient public transit systems, managing traffic congestion, and ensuring last-mile connectivity are essential for improving mobility in urban areas. Transport planning not only enhances convenience for residents but also reduces pollution and promotes sustainable development. Environmental sustainability has become a cornerstone of modern urban planning. Planners integrate green spaces, promote renewable energy solutions, and design eco-friendly infrastructure to mitigate the adverse effects of urbanisation, such as pollution and climate change. This is closely linked to disaster resilience planning, where cities are equipped to withstand natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, and heatwaves through adaptive infrastructure and preparedness measures.

Urban planning also encompasses economic development strategies aimed at enhancing the Physical Quality of Life (PQL) of the population by creating sustainable job opportunities and fostering inclusive economic growth. Through the development of well-connected commercial hubs and the promotion of entrepreneurship, urban planners contribute to economic prosperity and improved living standards. Simultaneously, focused attention is given to strengthening access to healthcare, education, housing, and other essential social services, particularly for marginalised and vulnerable communities. Community participation has emerged as a vital component of contemporary urban planning, as involving local residents in decision-making processes ensures that development initiatives reflect their needs and aspirations. Mechanisms such as public consultations and participatory workshops enhance transparency, build trust, and promote a sense of ownership among citizens, ultimately leading to more effective implementation and long-term urban sustainability. Development by inclusion is the core concern of urban planning, as it encompasses the entire populace of an urban area.

The use of technology has transformed urban planning in recent years. Tools like Geographic Information Systems (GIS), big data analytics, and simulation models enable planners to make data-driven decisions and accurately predict future growth patterns. These technologies also play a key role in the development of smart cities, where digital solutions are integrated into urban systems for enhanced governance and efficiency. Despite its importance, urban planning faces challenges such as rapid population growth, resource constraints, and poor governance. Unregulated urbanisation often leads to issues like slums, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental degradation. Planners must navigate competing interests among stakeholders and work within tight budgets and timelines to deliver effective solutions. Looking ahead, urban planning must adopt a holistic and adaptive approach to meet the demands of the 21st century. Prioritising sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience will be crucial in creating urban spaces that cater to present needs and anticipate future challenges. As cities continue to grow, urban planning will remain an indispensable tool in shaping a sustainable and equitable future for all.

6.2.1 Factors of Urban Planning

Urban planning is influenced by multiple factors that shape the development, sustainability, and functionality of cities. The key factors include:

1. Population Growth and Density

Population growth is a critical factor shaping urban planning, as it drives demand for housing, infrastructure, and services. Rapid urbanisation often leads to overcrowding and strain on existing resources, resulting in issues such as slums, traffic congestion, and inadequate water supply. Urban planners must assess population density to optimise land use, ensuring that high-density areas are well-serviced with utilities, transportation, and public spaces. Effective planning also involves forecasting future population growth to create resilient and scalable infrastructure.

2. Economic Development

Economic activities significantly influence urban planning, as cities often act as centres of trade, industry, and commerce. Planners must design urban areas to support job creation and business growth by allocating land for commercial hubs, industrial zones, and technology parks. Additionally, economic disparities within cities pose challenges, requiring planners to focus on the equitable distribution of resources and services to bridge socio-economic gaps. Economic prosperity also attracts migration, emphasising the need for sustainable urban design.

3. Environmental Sustainability

Urban planning must address the environmental impact of city development by incorporating sustainable practices. Green spaces, like parks and gardens, not only improve air quality but also enhance urban biodiversity. Planners focus on minimising the carbon footprint by promoting energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, and sustainable transport options, such as cycling lanes and electric buses. Climate change mitigation strategies, such as flood-resistant infrastructure and heat reduction techniques (e.g., green rooftops), are also integral to environmentally conscious urban planning.

4. Infrastructure and Connectivity

The backbone of any urban area is its infrastructure, roads, public transport, water supply, electricity, and sanitation facilities. Urban planning emphasises efficient and equitable infrastructure development to ensure that all citizens have access to essential services. Connectivity between residential areas, workplaces, and recreational spaces

is vital for reducing commuting times and improving quality of life. Planners also incorporate smart infrastructure systems, such as traffic management technologies, to enhance efficiency.

5. Government Policies and Regulations

Government policies serve as the framework within which urban planning operates. Zoning laws dictate how land can be used whether for residential, commercial, or industrial purposeswhile building codes ensure safety and compliance with architectural standards. National initiatives, such as India's Smart Cities Mission or AMRUT, guide urban development at a macro level. Regulatory hurdles, however, can sometimes slow down implementation, necessitating streamlined processes for approvals and clearances.

6. Technology and Innovation

The integration of technology has revolutionised urban planning. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) allow planners to map land use, analyse demographics, and predict growth patterns. Smart city concepts involve the use of data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and automation to manage urban services like waste collection and energy distribution. Innovations such as modular construction and prefabrication techniques enable faster, cost-effective housing development, making urban planning more dynamic and efficient.

7. Cultural and Heritage Considerations

Urban planning must respect and preserve the cultural and historical identity of cities. This involves protecting heritage sites, monuments, and traditional neighbourhoods from over-commercialisation or destruction due to modern development. Programmes like HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana) aim to integrate heritage conservation into urban planning. Balancing preservation with modernisation requires careful planning to ensure that cultural landmarks coexist with contemporary urban spaces.

8. Social Inclusion

An equitable urban plan addresses the diverse needs of all segments of the population, including marginalised communities such as the economically weaker sections, women, the elderly, and differently-abled individuals. This involves creating affordable housing, accessible public spaces, and inclusive public transport systems. Participatory planning processes engage citizens in decision-making, ensuring that development reflects the aspirations and needs of the community.

9. Land Availability and Use

Limited land availability in urban areas is a significant challenge for planners. Competing demands for residential, commercial, and industrial land often lead to conflicts and inefficiencies. Land pooling policies, where small parcels of land are consolidated for organised development, are increasingly being adopted. Planners must also address issues like land encroachment and informal settlements while ensuring optimal utilisation of the available land.

10. Disaster Preparedness and Resilience

Urban planning must account for the increasing risks posed by natural and man-made disasters. Cities require resilient infrastructure, such as flood defences, earthquake-resistant buildings, and robust drainage systems. Planners develop disaster management frameworks that include early warning systems, evacuation plans, and post-disaster recovery strategies. The goal is to minimise the loss of life and property while ensuring swift recovery from disasters.

In conclusion, urban planning is a multidimensional process influenced by

demographic, economic, environmental, infrastructural, governance, social, and technological factors. Effective planning ensures sustainable growth, efficient resource management, and improved quality of life for urban populations. However, challenges such as rapid urbanisation, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and governance issues must be addressed through strategic policies and innovative solutions. A well-planned city not only enhances economic opportunities and livability but also ensures resilience against future challenges. By integrating smart technologies, sustainable practices, and inclusive development, urban planning can create cities that are efficient, environmentally friendly, and socially equitable.

6.2.2 Significance, Principles, and Process of Urban Planning

Urban planning plays a crucial role in organising cities and towns to meet the needs of growing populations while avoiding haphazard and unregulated development. It contributes to orderly land use, functional urban layouts, efficient infrastructure provision, and improved quality of life. Through planned residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational zoning, urban planning supports economic growth, environmental sustainability, social equity, and urban resilience. However, beyond its significance, urban planning is fundamentally guided by well-defined principles and systematic processes.

The principles of urban planning provide the normative foundation for city development. Key principles include sustainability, which emphasises balanced environmental, economic, and social development; equity and inclusiveness, ensuring fair access to housing, infrastructure, and services for all sectors of society; efficiency, which promotes optimal use of land and resources; and livability, focusing on healthy environments, public spaces, and community well-being. Other important principles include compact development, connectivity, participatory governance, and resilience, which collectively guide cities toward long-term stability and adaptability.

The process of urban planning is systematic and continuous. It begins with data collection and situation analysis, involving demographic trends, land use patterns, infrastructure availability, and environmental conditions. This is followed by goal setting and vision formulation, where development priorities are identified. The next stage involves plan preparation, including land-use plans, zoning regulations, and infrastructure frameworks. Public participation and stakeholder consultation are integral to this process, ensuring that planning decisions reflect community needs. Finally, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation ensure that plans are effectively executed and adjusted in response to emerging challenges.

Thus, urban planning is not merely significant for city development but operates through clearly defined principles and structured processes. This integrated approach enables cities to achieve sustainable growth, efficient governance, and socially equitable outcomes while preparing for future urban challenges.

6.2.3 History of Urban Planning in India

After India's independence in 1947, urban planning gained prominence as the country confronted housing shortages, infrastructure deficits, and rapid urbanisation. In the initial years, national priorities focused largely on rural development, while urban growth occurred in an unplanned manner. The establishment of the Planning Commission in 1950 marked a significant shift, as urban development was incorporated into the

Five-Year Plans. Key areas such as housing, water supply, sanitation, and transport received systematic attention, leading to the planned development of industrial towns like Jamshedpur and Durgapur.

A landmark achievement in post-independence urban planning was the development of Chandigarh, India's first planned city, which introduced modern planning principles such as functional zoning and sector-based development. Other planned cities, including Bhubaneswar and Gandhinagar, followed similar approaches. During this period, rapid rural–urban migration led to the expansion of slums in major metropolitan cities. To address these challenges, programmes such as the Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) and the establishment of Urban Development Authorities like the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) were introduced.

The economic liberalisation of the 1990s accelerated urban growth, transforming metropolitan cities into economic centres. Urban planning increasingly focused on infrastructure expansion, industrial corridors, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and information technology hubs. The launch of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in 2005 marked a comprehensive effort to modernise urban infrastructure and reform urban governance.

In recent years, urban planning in India has shifted towards technology-driven and sustainable models. Initiatives such as the Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT emphasise digital governance, energy efficiency, improved infrastructure, and inclusive development, particularly in smaller cities and towns.

6.2.4 Typology of Urban Planning

Urban planning encompasses diverse approaches that address the varying spatial, economic, social, and environmental needs of cities. One of the most widely adopted forms is Master Planning, which provides a long-term vision for urban development, typically covering a period of 20 to 25 years. It outlines land-use patterns, infrastructure networks, housing zones, transportation systems, and environmental safeguards, serving as a guiding framework for orderly city growth.

Zonal Planning is a more detailed and regulatory approach that divides cities into specific zones such as residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational areas. This typology ensures efficient land use, minimises conflicts between incompatible activities, and facilitates effective development control. Closely related to this is Development Planning, which focuses on implementing building regulations, floor area ratios, and land-use controls to manage urban expansion.

Strategic Planning addresses broader economic and regional objectives by linking urban development with economic competitiveness, investment promotion, and regional integration. It is particularly relevant for metropolitan regions and rapidly growing urban corridors. In contrast, Participatory Planning emphasises the involvement of local communities, stakeholders, and civil society in planning processes, ensuring that development initiatives reflect local needs and promote social inclusion.

With increasing environmental concerns, Sustainable Urban Planning has emerged

as a critical typology. It prioritises resource efficiency, green spaces, renewable energy, climate resilience, and reduced carbon emissions. More recently, Smart Urban Planning has gained prominence, integrating digital technologies, data analytics, and intelligent infrastructure to enhance service delivery, governance, and quality of life.

Thus, these typologies reflect the evolving nature of urban planning, demonstrating how cities adopt multiple planning approaches to achieve balanced, inclusive, and sustainable urban development.

Recap

- Urban planning is a crucial process for organized and sustainable development of cities, ensuring efficient land use, infrastructure, and resources to address societal needs.
- Urban planning strategic frameworks to enhance housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, and economic growth.
- Key factors in urban planning include spatial planning, zoning, public services, and community engagement.
- The significance of urban planning lies in its ability to tackle challenges such as rapid urbanization, slum expansion, traffic congestion, and pollution, while promoting social inclusion and sustainability.
- Environmental sustainability is a priority, with efforts to incorporate green spaces, renewable energy, and efficient waste management systems.
- Urban planning in India traces back to the Indus Valley Civilization, known for its grid-patterned cities and advanced drainage systems.
- Modern urban planning evolved during the colonial period and has been further shaped by programs like Smart Cities Mission, JNNURM, AMRUT, and PMAY.
- Integrated policies, technological innovations, and active citizen participation are vital for effective urban planning and creating inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.

Objective Questions

1. What is the importance of urban planning?
2. Which factor of urban planning deals with zoning and land use management?
3. Why is environmental sustainability important in urban planning?
4. What are the key factors of environmental sustainability in urban planning?
5. What challenges affect social inclusion in urban areas?
6. What does social inclusion aim to achieve in urban planning?
7. Which ancient civilization contributed to the earliest examples of urban planning in India?
8. What were key features of urban planning in the Indus Valley Civilization?
9. Which historical event marked the introduction of formal urban planning policies in India?
10. What is the role of modern urban planning in addressing climate change?

Answers

1. Development of cities, optimizes land use, addresses infrastructure needs
2. Spatial planning
3. Environmental impact, conserves resources, reduces pollution, and promotes healthy urban ecosystems
4. Waste management, efficient transportation systems, green spaces
5. Inadequate public services, and cultural or social segregation.
6. Resources, and services for all social groups
7. The Indus Valley Civilization

8. Advanced drainage systems, and well-organized infrastructure.
9. The colonial period under British rule
10. Sustainable transportation, and climate-resilient urban infrastructure.

Assignments

1. Critically examine the key factors influencing urban planning in contemporary cities with suitable examples.
2. Explain the differences typologies of urban planning with suitable examples.
3. Examine the role of technology and smart city initiative in transforming urban planning practices in India.
4. Analyse the role of urban planning in disaster preparedness and urban resilience with examples.
5. Critically evaluate the history of urban planning in India, after independence.

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MODEL QUESTION PAPER SETS

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MODEL QUESTION PAPER I

SIXTH SEMESTER BA SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION

DISCIPLINE CORE -B21SO07DC –URBAN SOCIOLOGY

(CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours Max Marks: 70

Section A (*Objective Type Questions)*

I Answer any ten of the following questions in one word or sentence.

1. Who wrote *The Metropolis and Mental Life* ?
2. What term did Louis Wirth use to describe lifestyles in cities?
3. What concept compares cities to ecosystems with "natural areas"?
4. Which sociologist introduced the *ecological complex* model?
5. Which approach studies urban traits like population density?
6. Who proposed the Rural-Urban Continuum model?
7. What is the central zone in Burgess's model called?
8. According to the Census of India, a town with a population between 20,000 and 50,000 falls under which category?
9. Which scholar argued that marketplaces are central to the existence of cities?
10. Who introduced the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* to describe forms of social organisation?
11. Who authored the book *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*?
12. According to Castells, what is the primary focus of the new urban politics?
13. Who developed the Concentric Zone Theory?
14. Who proposed the Sector Theory?
15. Which company launched the "Take Back" campaign for mobile phone recycling in India?

(10×1=10 marks)

Section B (*Very Short Answers)*

II Answer any ten of the following questions in one or two sentences.

16. Folk Society
17. Megalopolis
18. Exurb
19. Consumer City
20. Gemeinschaft
21. Little Community
22. Urban Ecology
23. The Central Business District
24. The Commuter's Zone
25. Slum
26. Relative Poverty
27. Necropolis
28. Solid waste management (SWM)
29. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)
30. Gentrification

(10×2=20 marks)

Section C (*Short Answers)*

III Answer any five of the following questions in one paragraph

31. Define and differentiate between "urban" and "urbane" with examples, tracing their etymological roots.
32. Explain Louis Wirth's concept of "urbanism as a way of life" and discuss its relevance in modern cities.
33. Compare the characteristics of ancient, medieval, and modern Indian cities. Discuss how their functions, populations, and governance systems evolved over time.

34. Explain the major causes of urbanization, discussing the roles of industrialization, commercialization, social benefits, employment opportunities, and modernization.

35. Examine the various types of cities as discussed by Weber.

36. What elements characterise urban communities?

37. Critically evaluate the key differences between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, and explain how they represent different stages in social evolution.

38. Compare and contrast the roles of ethnic enclaves and gated communities in shaping urban social and economic dynamics.

39. Analyse the challenges of waste management in India and suggest sustainable solutions suitable for urban areas.

40. Compare the contributions of private companies like SPML Enviro, HCL Infosystems, and ITC Limited in improving waste management practices in India.

(5×4=20 marks)

Section D (*Long Answers/Essay)*

IV Answer any two of the following questions in 300 words.

41. Examine the rise of exurbs in India. How do factors suchas remote work, highway development, and real estate expansion contribute to this trend? What are its socio-economic and environmental implications?

42. Describe the changes occurring in the Indian urban family system. How have factors such as women's employment, family planning, external agencies, and changing marriage norms contributed to the transformation of family structures in cities?

43. Discuss the major social classes in urban India. Explain the historical emergence of the capitalist class, the development of the professional class, the role of petty traders and unorganized workers, and the evolution of the working class during and after the British period.

44. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the economic and anthropological perspectives on defining urban poverty. Use examples to illustrate your points.

(2×10=20 marks)

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MODEL QUESTION PAPER II

SIXTH SEMESTER BA SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION

DISCIPLINE CORE -B21SO07DC –URBAN SOCIOLOGY

(CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours Max Marks: 70

Section A (*Objective Type Questions)*

I Answer any ten of the following questions in one word or sentence.

1. Which Indian sociologist contributed to early urban studies in India?
2. Which city type dominates a country's urban system?
3. What term describes interconnected metropolises?
4. Who first defined the rural–urban fringe as a transitional zone between urban and agricultural land uses?
5. Which region of India is more urbanized due to strong historical, sociocultural, and educational resources?
6. What are the major causes of traffic congestion in the cities?
7. Who are conjurations?
8. What is the study of human-environment interaction in cities called?
9. Who developed the Multiple Nuclei Theory?
10. What is meant by *Gesellschaft*?
11. Who authored the work *Philosophy of Money*?
12. Which Mexican village did Redfield study as an example of a folk society?
13. What term did Peter Hall use to describe the geographic clustering of information and communication hubs?
14. Who authored the work *The City and the Grassroots?*
15. Which ministry is responsible for the implementation of PMAY in India?

(10×1=10 marks)

Section B (*Very Short Answers)*

II Answer any ten of the following questions in one or two sentences.

16. Urban Agglomeration

17. Suburbanisation

18. Periurbanisation

19. Rural–Urban Continuum

20. Merchant City

21. Gesellschaft

22. Urban Hydrology

23. The Zone of Better Residences

24. Wholesale and Light Industry Zone

25. Ethnic Enclave

26. Gated Communities

27. Poverty Line

28. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

29. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)

30. Rural-Urban Fringe

(10×2=20 marks)

Section C (*Short Answers)*

III Answer any five of the following questions in one paragraph

31. How did the Chicago School contribute to the development of urban sociology? Identify two limitations of their approach.

32. Define urbanization and explain how the Census of India classifies an area as urban. Discuss the key features used to identify an urban area.

33. Describe the concepts of suburbanization and peri-urbanization. How do metropolitan expansion and the POET factors contribute to suburban growth in India?

34. Describe Durkheim's view on urban social life. Do you think that increased urbanisation leads to interdependence? Justify your answer.

35. Explain the concept of the Folk-Urban Continuum and critically assess its relevance in understanding rural-urban interactions in contemporary society.

36. Evaluate Robert Redfield's concepts of the Great and Little Traditions. How do they reflect the interaction between elite and popular culture in traditional societies?

37. Discuss how Harvey's integration of Marx's theory of capital with the concept of urbanisation contributes to contemporary debates on neoliberal urbanism and globalisation.

38. Discuss the features of Concentric Zone theory and its criticisms.

39. Explain the main difference between Hoyt's Sector Theory and Multiple nuclei theory.

40. Critically examine the causes of slum growth in India, with specific reference to economic, social, and policy-related factors mentioned in the text.

(5×4=20 marks)

Section D (*Long Answers/Essay)*

IV Answer any two of the following questions in 300 words.

41. Compare and contrast Burgess's Concentric Zone Theory with Harris and Ullman's Multiple Nuclei Theory. Which model better explains urban growth in 21st-century cities? Support your answer with case studies.

42. Critically analyse Louis Wirth's theory of "urbanism as a way of life" in explaining urban crime, and evaluate its relevance to contemporary Indian urban society.

43. *"Redfield's Rural-Urban Continuum oversimplifies the complexities of modern settlements."* Critically evaluate this statement with examples from both developed and developing countries.

44. Examine the relationship between urbanization, industrialization, and juvenile delinquency, highlighting both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings.

(2×10=20 marks)

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യയാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

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