

# CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS



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## CLASSIFICATION OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS

“URBAN” is not a new term. It is always referred to in “RURAL” terms. The growth and potential of urban settlements is yet not fully understood or realized, else it could have been controlled and its after effect could have analysed. We should not ignore the peculiarity of genuine urban growth. Urban settlements could be studied as a referral code of urban growth. And urbanization leads further to the classification of urban settlements which is the focus point right now. J.M Houston (A Social Geography of Europe, Duckworth, 1953) has recognized three stages.

- (i) The Nuclear Stage:** represented by central area of a town inside wall like Paris, Moscow.
- (ii) The Formative stage:** houses outside the central area along lines of transport.
- (iii) The Modern Stage:** Development of motor transport and growth of suburban towns in a large way.

Griffith Taylor (Urban Geography, London Methven, 1949) has examined 4 stages of growth of urban settlement of Canada.

- (i) The infantile stage:** Towns where residential and commercial areas cannot be separated and buildings are haphazardly distributed.
- (ii) The Juvenile Stage:** The skyline of the houses rises and factories are also established. e.g. Munger.
- (iii) The Mature Stage:** This stage is marked by well separated residential and commercial areas. The rise and new colonies on the fringe and vertical expansion is the rule. E.g. Delhi, Patna, Ontario, London.
- (iv) Senility:** In this stage the growth stops. Decay of some areas and decline in economic development starts. e.g. Yorkshire, Lancashire, Durban, Agra, Mathura, Muzaffarnagar.

All these stages engulf the characteristics found today in the urban settlements.

**Hence a general classification is given by Lewis Mumford herewith,**

**(i) Eopolis:** A small town of village origin based on agriculture, mining and fishing.

**(ii) Polis:** Market town with wholesale grain market.

**(iii) Metropolis:** It is a large city with 10 lakhs of population.

**(iv) Megapolis:** When main cities and metropolis coalesce to form a giant urban centre.

**(v) Tyranopolis:** In this country wide urbanization predominated the scene. Here the display and expense become the measurement of culture.

**(vi) Nekropolis:** It is known as ghost city or dead city. This stage come due to war, famine, diseases, decay of culture.

**Besides all these a general classification is as under:**

**(i) Village**

**(ii) Town**

**(iii) City**

**(iv) Metropolis**

**(v) Conurbation**

**(vi) Megapolis**

**(vii) Tyranopolis**

**(viii) Ecumonopolis**

**(ix) Nekropolis**

### **Classification based on population:**

- 1. Small town** - Less than 50,000 population
- 2. Major towns** - 50,000 to 99,999 population
- 3. City** - 1,00,000 population
- 4. Metropolis** - 1,000,000 population

### **Classification based on functions:**

- 1. Administrative Towns:** These are mainly the capital city, centres of provinces, states, district headquarters.  
These are organized. E.g. Delhi, Lucknow, Mumbai etc.
- 2. Commercial Towns:** These are towns where retailing and trading is the biggest function. It houses, financial offices, business buildings, banks and offer commercial services. E.g. Kanpur, Nagpur, Agra, Bhopal, London, New York.
- 3. Market Towns:** These are the places of collection and distribution of various goods as main function and perform exchange activity. Usually these towns have mandis, wide range of shops, stores, godowns, warehouses, supported by a good network of transport facilities.
- 4. Mining Towns:** The main function of such towns is exploitation of minerals from mines. Their location is governed by the availability of mineral resources. E.g. Raniganj, Jharia, Bokaro etc.
- 5. Industrial Towns:** These towns mainly perform secondary activities of changing raw materials into finished goods. Such towns provide facilities of power, labour, market, efficient network of communication and transport. e.g. Bangalore (watches), Bokaro (steel), Surat (Textiles).

## **6. Cultural Towns:**

**(i) Educational** - Patna, Allahabad, Bangalore, Cambridge, Oxford.

**(ii) Entertainment** - Mumbai, Hollywood.

**(iii) Religious** - Varanasi, Rishikesh, Jerusalem, Ayodhya, Mecca.

**(iv) Resort** -

**(a) Coastal Resorts** - Puri, Mumbai, Goa, Kochi.

**(b) Hill Resorts** - Shimla, Mussorie, Nainital.

**7. Defensive Towns:** Such towns may be naval dock, air bases and are characterized by barracks, cantonment special air fields, training centres for army, equipped hospitals. E.g. Ambala, Dehradun, Cochi, Chennai.

**8. Residential Towns:** These are mainly new and planned towns located far from the congested cities and provide residential facilities for urban people. These are well planned and have healthy environment. E.g. Chandigarh.

Later others have classified the urban settlements as- Secondary and Tertiary. The settlements performing industrial activities are secondary and settlements performing services are tertiary settlements.

Reference:

*R.B. Mandal, Urban Geography*