

Geography of Settlement

Unit

II:

Rural Settlements: Concept,
Characteristics and Factors – Types and
Patterns. Regional characteristics –
Morphology Rural problems and
planning.

Types and Patterns of Rural Settlement:

Rural settlements are most closely and directly related to land. They are dominated by primary activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing etc. The settlements size is relatively small

Definition :

Any settlement in which most of the people are engaged in agriculture, forestry, mining and fishery is known as rural settlement. It is often called as agri-cultural workshop.

Types of the settlement are determined by the extent of the built-up area and inter-house distance. In India compact or clustered village of a few hundred houses is a rather universal feature, particularly in the northern plains. However, there are several areas, which have other forms of rural settlements.

There are various factors and conditions responsible for having different types of rural settlements in India.

These include

A) Physical features: Nature of terrain, altitude, climate and availability of water

B) Cultural and Ethnic factor: Social structure, caste and religion

C) Security factors: Defence against thefts and robberies.

Rural settlements in India can broadly be put into four types.

1) Compact settlements:

2) Semi-compact settlements:

3) Hamleted settlements:

4) Dispersed settlements:

1) Compact settlements:

If the number of villages equals the number of hamlets in an area unit, the settlement is designated as compact. Such settlements are found throughout the plateau region of Malwa, in the Narmada Valley, Nimar upland, large parts of Rajasthan, paddy lands in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Vindhyan Plateau and several other cultivated parts of India. In such villages all the dwellings are concentrated in one central site. The inhabitants of the village live together and enjoy the benefits of community life. Such settlements range from a cluster of about thirty to hundreds of dwellings of different forms, sizes and functions. Their size varies from 500 to 2,500 persons in sparsely populated parts like Rajasthan to more than 10,000 in the Ganga plain.

2) Semi-compact settlements:

If the number of villages equals more than half of the hamlets, it is semi-compact settlement. These are found both in plains and plateaus depending upon the environmental conditions prevailing there. The dwellings in such settlements are not very closely knitted and are huddled together at one common site. It covers more area than the compact settlements; the hamlets occupy new sites near the periphery of the village boundary.

3) Hamleted settlements:

If the number of villages is equal to half of hamlet number, it is a hamlet settlement. The hamlets are spread over the area with intervening fields and the main or central settlement is either absent or has feeble influence upon others. Often the original site is not easily distinguishable and the morphological diversity is rarely noticed. Such settlements are found in West Bengal, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and coastal plains.

4) Dispersed settlements:

If the number of villages is less than half the number of hamlets, the settlement is regarded as dispersed. The inhabitants of dispersed settlements live in isolated dwellings scattered in the cultivated fields. Individualism, sentiments of living freely, Custom of marriage relations are conducive to such settlements.

However, these dwellings are deprived of neighborhood communal Interdependence and social interaction. Dispersed settlements are found in tribal areas covering central part of India, eastern and southern Rajasthan, Himalayan slopes and land with dissected and uneven topography. Homesteads or farmsteads or wheat producing areas in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh also belong to this category.

Rural Settlement Patterns:

Patterns of rural settlements reflect the way the houses are sited in relation to each other. The site of the village, the surrounding topography and terrain influence the shape and size of a village. Rural settlements may be classified on the basis of a number of criteria:

- 1) On the basis of setting:** The main types are plain villages, plateau villages, coastal villages, forest villages and desert villages.
- 2) On the basis of functions:** There may be farming villages, fishermen's villages, lumberjack villages, pastora villages etc.
- 3) On the basis of forms or shapes of the settlements:** These may be a number of geometrical forms and shapes such as Linear rectangular, circular star like, T-shaped village, double village, cross-shaped village etc.

a) Linear pattern: In such settlements houses are located along a road, railway line, and river, canal edge of a valley or along a levee.

Linear pattern is the other most important design of settlements. In the linear settlements, houses are arranged along either side of a road, railway line, river or canal. Such settlements also evolve along the edge of a valley, especially in the mountainous areas, above flood level or along the coast.

The development of linear settlements in the hilly areas is largely controlled by terrain and topography. Along the river banks and the sea shore, the flood and water level influence linear settlements.

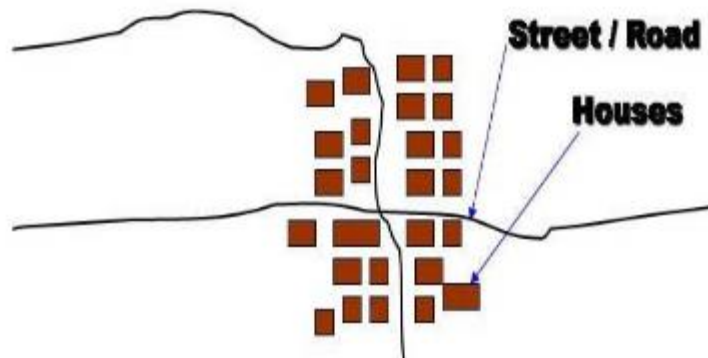


b) Rectangular pattern: Such patterns of rural settlements are found in plain areas or wide inter montane valleys. The roads are rectangular and cut each other at right angles.

Over 50 per cent of the world population lives in rural settlements, and most of the people inhabit the settlements of rectangular pattern. Rectangular settlements mainly develop in productive alluvial plains and wide intermontane valleys.


The lanes in the rectangular settlements are almost straight, meeting each other at right angles. The rural settlements of the Sutlej-Ganga plains, especially those which developed on the cross-roads, fall in this category.

Checker Board or Rectangular Pattern



c) Circular pattern: Circular villages develop around lakes, tanks and sometimes the village is planned in such a way that the central part remains open and is used for keeping the animals to protect them from wild animals.



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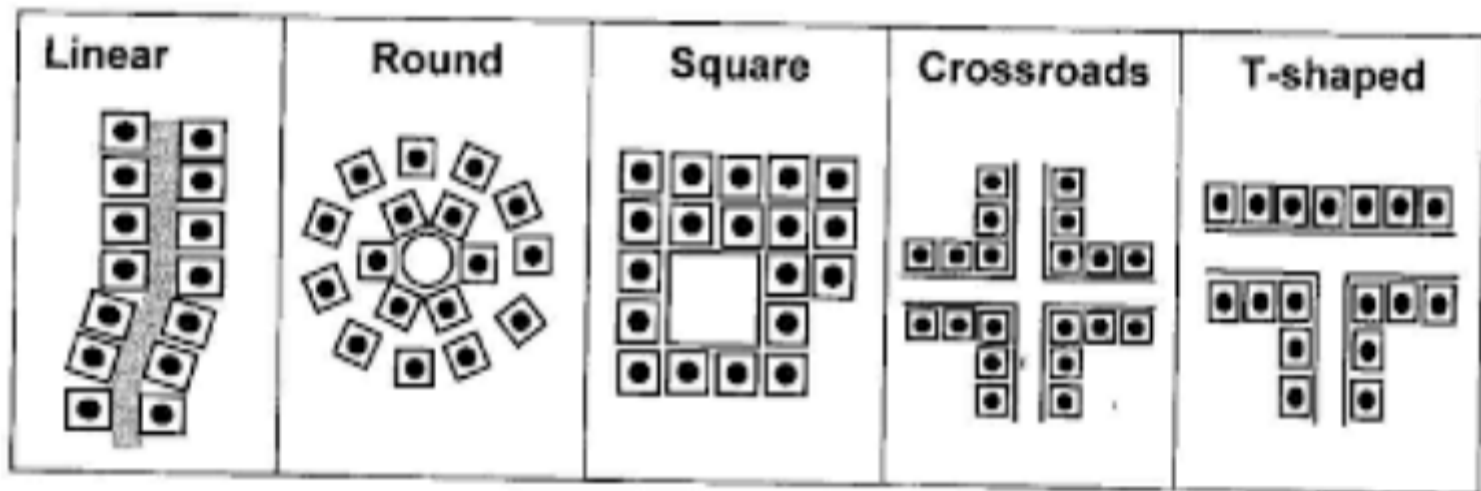
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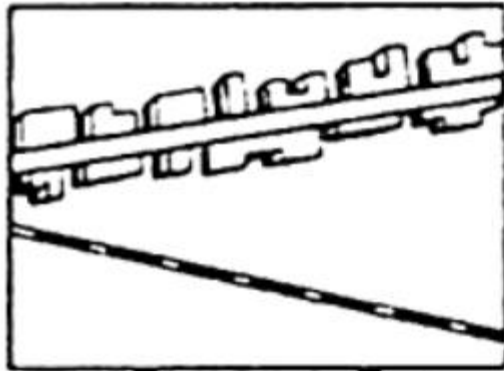
e) Square Patterns: The square pattern of villages is normally found in agricultural region. In such type of villages houses are arranged in two or more rows with streets running parallel to each other. Such villages are found having strong agglomeration. Sometime villages are protected by walls. The entire village is divided into Small Square of houses occupying the people of different castes. In the study area Jat, Sangole and Mangalvedhe, Pandharpur and Atpadi Talukas have square pattern of villages, of which Shegaon, Hunnar.



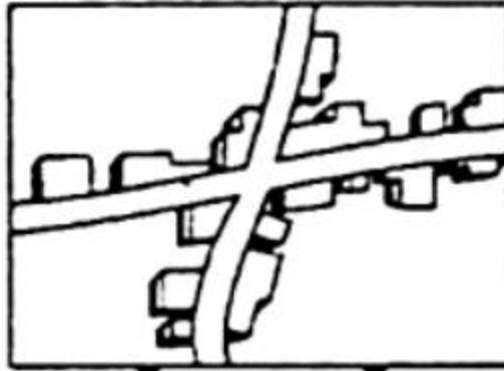
f) T-shaped, Y-shaped, Cross-shaped or cruciform settlements: T-shaped settlements develop at tri-junctions of the roads (T) while (Y) shaped settlements emerge as the places where two roads converge on the third one and houses are built along these roads. Cruciform settlements develop on the cross-roads and houses extend in all the four direction.

g) Double village: These settlements extend on both sides of a river where there is a bridge or a ferry.

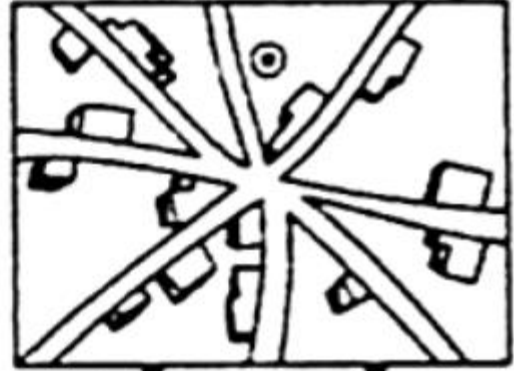




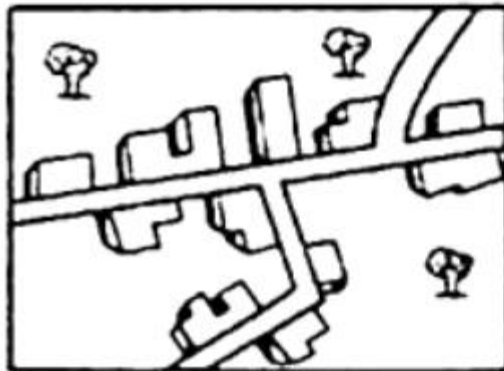
Linear Pattern



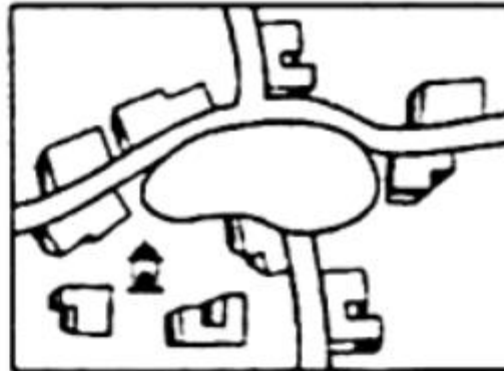
Cross-shape Pattern



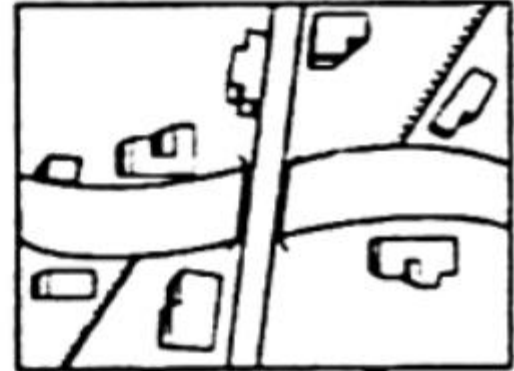
Star-like Pattern



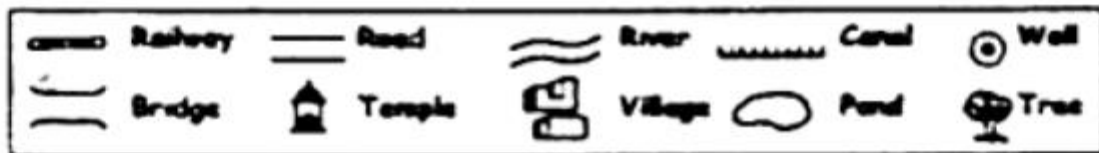
T-Shape Pattern



Circular Pattern



Double Pattern



Factors Affecting on Rural Settlement:

Rural settlements are most closely and directly related to land. They are dominated by primary activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing etc. The settlements size is relatively small. Some factors affecting the location of rural settlements are:

1) Water Supply: Usually rural settlements are located near water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and springs where water can be easily obtained. Sometimes the need for water drives people to settle in otherwise disadvantaged sites such as islands surrounded by swamps or low lying river banks. Most water based wet point' settlements have many advantages such as water for drinking, cooking and washing. Rivers and lakes can be used to irrigate farm land. Water bodies also have fish which can be caught for diet and navigable rivers and lakes can be used for transportation.

2) Land: People choose to settle near fertile lands suitable for agriculture. In Europe villages grew up near rolling country avoiding swampy, low lying land while people in South East Asia chose to live near low lying river valleys and coastal plains suited for wet rice cultivation. Early settlers chose plain areas with fertile soils.

3) Upland: Upland which is not prone to flooding was chosen to prevent damage to houses and loss of life. Thus, in low lying river basins people chose to settle on terraces and levees which are "dry points". In tropical countries people build their houses on stilts near marshy lands to protect themselves from flood, insects and animal pests.

4) Building Material: The availability of building materials- wood, stone near settlements is another advantage. Early villages were built in forest clearings where wood was plentiful. In loess areas of China, cave dwellings were important and African Savanna's building materials were mud bricks and the Eskimos, in Polar Regions, use ice blocks to construct igloos.

5) Defense: During the times of political instability, war, hostility of neighboring groups villages were built on defensive hills and islands. In Nigeria, upstanding inselbergs formed good defensive sites. In India most of the forts are located on higher grounds or hills.

6) Planned Settlements: Sites that are not spontaneously chosen by villagers themselves, planned settlements are constructed by governments by providing shelter, water and other infrastructures on acquired lands. The scheme of villagisation in Ethiopia and the canal colonies in Indira Gandhi canal command area in India are some good examples.

Functions of Rural Settlement:

The people living in the rural areas all over the world are engaged and dependent on various primary occupations, viz, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and mining.

1) Agriculture: Agriculture is the most important occupation. Consequently, the functions of most of the peoples of rural settlements are generally agricultural. Apart from cultivation of crops and domestication of animals the rural settlements perform other functions. Its religious place - Mosque, Temple, Gurdwaara or Church - with one or two shops is a center of religious and social activities. The village panchayats (in India) and village councils in other countries perform some administrative and judicial functions. In the socialist countries like Russia, North Korea, and China, the village councils decide when certain crops should be sown, irrigated, or harvested.

2) Fishery: In the rural settlements where fishermen live, the main activity is fishing. The fishing villages are sited on rivers, lakes and sea - coasts and the people look to the water rather than the land to get their livelihood. Although the main occupation of these villages is fishing but this may be combined with some agricultural activity.

3) Gathering of Forest Products and Lumbering: There are numerous rural settlements in the forest areas, which the dominant economic activity is gathering of forest products and lumbering. Such villages are generally small in size and may be found in the Taiga region, forest areas of the Sub-Himalayan region and hilly tracts like Northeast India, In the forests where lumbering is on a large scale and timber industry has developed, Urban rather than rural settlements are more usual.

4) Small Trade Centers: Generally villages function as small trade centers. They are necessarily exporting their surplus products, which need and efficient means of transport and trading facilities in the nearby areas for the movement of goods and people. Nowadays, the increases in communication, electric power, and machineries in each and every field besides the rise in education have bought many small rural settlements for greater contact, interactions, and increased trade.

5) Pedagogic Function: Rural settlement also performs a pedagogic function. First of all, the village and habitation are for many people miniature reproductions of what a give group considers as an ideal environment. Thus through the rural habitation we can grasp the esthetic and cultural manifestation of rural inhabitants.

Problems of Rural Settlement:

Rural settlements in the developing countries are large in number and poorly equipped with infrastructure. They represent a great challenge and opportunity for planners.

1) Supply of water to rural settlements in developing countries is not adequate. People in villages, particularly in mountainous and arid areas have to walk long distances to fetch drinking water. Water borne diseases such as cholera and jaundice tend to be a common problem. The countries of South Asia face conditions of drought and flood very often. Crop cultivation sequences, in the absence of irrigation, also suffer.

2) The general absence of toilet and garbage disposal facilities cause health related problems.

3) The design and use of building materials of houses vary from one ecological region to another. The houses made up of mud, wood and thatch, remain susceptible to damage during heavy rains and floods, and require proper maintenance every year. Most house designs are typically deficient in proper ventilation. Besides, the design of a house includes the animal shed along with its fodder-store within it. This is purposely done to keep the domestic animals and their food properly protected from wild animals

4) Unmetalled roads and lack of modern communication network creates a unique problem. During rainy season, the settlements remain cut off and pose serious difficulties in providing emergency services.

5) It is area also difficult to provide adequate health and educational infrastructure for their large rural population. The problem is particularly serious where proper villagisation has not taken place and houses are scattered over a large area.

Rural development is a complete term that concentrates on the action taken for the development of rural areas improve the village economy. However, few areas that demand more focused attention and new initiatives are.

1. Education
2. Public Health and Sanitation
3. Women Empowerment
4. Infrastructure Development (e.g. electricity, irrigation, etc.)
5. Facilities for agriculture extension and research
6. Availability of Credit
7. Employment opportunity

Morphology of rural settlement:

Morphological of rural settlements means internal structure and layout of villages. Settlement morphology is primarily concerned with the lay-out, plan and internal structure of the settlements.

It not only views settled area in terms of physical space but identifies its various components in respect of socio-economic space which has its direct bearing in controlling the arrangement of buildings, patterns of streets and fields and functional characteristics of settlements in general.

it helps in understanding the socio-cultural structure of the villages, their economic and sanitary conditions as well as their response to new innovations

For example, the Dominant community is generally occupied in the central part and the lower class occupied in the periphery region generally called "tola".

The ground plan mainly includes street patterns, arrangement of buildings and cultural artifacts like temple, fort, residence of village and market place etc, process of change is comparatively slow.-Built-up area undergoes frequent changes. Doxiadis has identified four main parts within the morphological structure of a settlement. These include : (a) homogeneous part consisting of fields, grazing land etc.(b) circulatory part consisting of village roads, streets and lanes etc.

(c) central part provided by the built-up area of the village.(d) special part marked with temple, school, Panchayatghar etc•The built-up area consisting of clusters of houses is surrounded by cultivated fields and linked with kachcha and pakka roads or village footpaths.

The main village and its outlying hamlets, though physically detached from each other, function as an integrated unit under the old jajmani system.