Unit III:

Urban Settlements: Concepts and characteristics. Urbanization: Factors – Urbanization in India and the World – Functional classifications of urban centers.

Urban Settlements: Concepts and characteristics:

Characteristics of Urban Settlement:

Following are the characteristics of urban settlement:

1) Size: A rule, in the same country and at the same period, the size of an urban settlement is much larger than that of a rural community. In other words, urbanity and size of a community are positively correlated.

2) Density of Population: Density of population in urban settlement is greater than in rural communities. Urbanity and density are positively correlated.

3) Family: So far as urban settlement is concerned, greater importance is attached to the individual than to the family. Nuclear families are more popular in urban areas.

4) Occupation: In the urban settlement, the major occupations are industrial, administrative and professional in nature. Divisions of labour and occupational specialization are very much common in towns/cities/metropolises.

5) Class Extremes: In the words of Bogardus, "Class extremes characterize the city." A town and a city house the richest as well as the poorest of people. In a city, the slums of the poor exist alongside the palatial bungalows of the rich, amidst the apartments of the middle class members. The most civilized modes of behaviour as well as the worst racketeering are found in the cities.

6) Social Heterogeneity: If villages are the symbol of cultural homogeneity, the urban settlements symbolize cultural heterogeneity. The urban settlements are characterized by diverse peoples, races and cultures. There is great variety in regard to the food habits, dress habits, living conditions, religious beliefs, cultural outlook, customs and traditions of the urbanites.

7) Social Distance: Social distance is the result of anonymity and heterogeneity. Most of one's routine social contacts in a town or city are impersonal and segmentary in character. In the urban community social responses are incomplete and half-hearted. There is utter lack of personal involvement in the affairs of others.

8) System of Interaction: Georg Simmel held that the social structure of urban settlement is based on interest groups. The circles of social contact are wider in the city than in the country. There is a wider area of interaction system per man and per aggregate. This makes city life more complex and varied. The city life is characterized by the predominance of secondary contacts, impersonal, casual and short-lived relations. Man, at any rate. the man in the street, virtually loses his identity being treated as a "number" having a certain "address".

9) Mobility: The most important feature of urban settlement is its social mobility. In urban areas classification of Urban Settlements the social status of an individual is determined not by heredity or birth but by his merit, intelligence and perseverance. Urbanity and mobility are positively correlated.

10) Materialism: In the urban settlement the social existence of man revolves round wealth and material possessions. The worth of an urbanite today is being judged not by what he is but by what he has. Status symbols in the form of financial assets, salaries, costly home appliances count a lot for the urbanites.

Urbanization:

At present, countries all over the world are facing with the same issues and problems concerning environment, social, transportation, economy and many others in their respective cities. These issues which frequently occurred in developing countries mainly caused by the discrepancy of development in cities and villages. This imbalance development between the urban and rural areas is believed to cause such issues problems.

Meaning:

Urbanization refers to the population shift from rural to urban residency, the gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas, and the ways in which each society adapts to this change. It is predominantly the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more people begin living and working in central areas. Although the two concepts are sometimes used interchangeably, urbanization should be distinguished from urban growth:

Causes of Urbanisation:

Urbanisation denotes a diffusion of the influence of urban centres to a rural hinterland. Urbanisation can also be defined as a process of concentration of population in particular territory. According to Mitchell urbanisation is a process of becoming urban moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities. Various reasons have led to the growth of cities. They are as follows:

1) Industrialization: Industrialization is a major cause of urbanization. It has expanded the employment opportunities. Rural people have migrated to cities on account of better employment opportunities.

2) Social Factors: Many social factors such as attraction of cities, better standard of living, better educational facilities, need for status also induce people to migrate to cities.

3) Employment Opportunities: In rural sector people have to depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. But Indian agriculture is depending on monsoon. In drought situations or natural calamities, rural people have to migrate to cities.

4) Modernization: Urban areas are characterized by sophisticated technology better infrastructure, communication, medical facilities, etc. People feel that they can lead a comfortable life in cities and migrate to cities.

5) Rural Urban Transformation: It is an interesting aspect that not only cities are growing in number but rural community is adopting urban culture, no longer rural communities are retaining their unique rural culture. Rural people are following the material culture of urban people. Urban rural transformation can be observed in the following areas.

6) Proper Infrastructure and Utilities: As been mentioned before, most countries all over the world are focusing on the development of major cities as the centre of government and business. As such, the cities will be definitely equipped with a better infrastructure and utilities such as roads and transportation, water, electricity and others.

7) Availability of Public Facilities: In addition to proper infrastructure and utilities, the cities also offered better public facilities which are not found in rural areas. Since a variety of public facilities such as health and education are provided in the cities, people have more options to choose either to use public or private.

Effects of Urbanization:

The urban heat island has become a growing concern and is increasing over the years, The urban heat island is formed when industrial and urban areas are developed and heat becomes more abundant, Urbanization also comes with costs. Some impact or effect of urbanization is given below:

1) Economic Effects: The most striking immediate change accompanying urbanisation is the rapid change in the prevailing character of local livelihoods as agriculture or more traditional local services and small-scale industry give way to modern industry and urban and related commerce, with the city drawing on the resources of an ever-widening area for its own sustenance and goods to be traded or process.

2) Ecological and Environmental Effects: A major issue facing large cities is the disposal of the ever-growing volume of waste which accompanies increased affluence and reliance on purchased goods. Apart from the unsightliness of disposal sites, harmful synthetic materials in packaging, household appliances or machinery may threaten neighbouring rural areas or water sources.

3) Positive Effects of Urbanization: Urbanization yields several positive effects if it happens within the appropriate limits. Some of the positive implications of urbanization therefore include creation of employment opportunities, technological and infrastructural advancements, improved transportation and communication, quality educational and medical facilities, and improved standards of living.

4) Housing Problems: Urbanization attracts people to cities and towns which lead to high population increase. With the increase in the number of people living in urban centers, there is continued scarcity of houses. This is due to insufficient expansion space for housing and public utilities, poverty, unemployment, and costly building materials which can only be afforded by few individuals.

5) Overcrowding: Overcrowding is a situation whereby a huge number of people live in a small space. This form of congestion in urban areas is consistent because of overpopulation and it is an aspect that increases day by day as more people and immigrants move into cities and towns in search of better life.

6) Unemployment: The problem of joblessness is highest in urban areas and it is even higher among the educated people. It is estimated that more than half of unemployed youths around the globe live in metropolitan cities. And, as much as income in urban areas is high, the costs of living make the incomes to seem horribly low. The increasing relocation of people from rural or developing areas to urban areas is the leading cause of urban unemployment.

7) Development of Slums: The cost of living in urban areas is very high. When this is combined with random and unexpected growth as well as unemployment, there is the spread of unlawful resident settlements represented by slums and squatters. The growth of slums and squatters in urban areas is even further exacerbated by fast-paced industrialization, lack of developed land for housing, large influx of rural immigrants to the cities in search of better life, and the elevated prices of land beyond the reach of the urban poor.

8) Water and Sanitation Problems: Because of overpopulation and rapid population increase in most urban centers, it: common to find there are inadequate sewage facilities. Municipalities and local governments are faced with serious resource crisis in the management of sewage facilities. As a result, sanitation becomes poor and sewages flow chaotically, and they are drained into neighbouring streams, rivers, lakes, or seas. Eventually communicable diseases such as typhoid, dysentery, plague, and diarrhoea spread very fast leading to suffering and even deaths. Overcrowding also highly contributes to water scarcity as supply falls short of demand.

9) Poor Health and Spread of Diseases: The social, economic and living conditions in congested urban areas affects access and utilization of public health care services. Slum areas in particular experience poor sanitation and insufficient water supply which generally make slum populations susceptible to communicable diseases. The environmental problems such as urban pollution also cause many health problems namely allergies, asthma, infertility, food poisoning, cancer and even premature deaths.

10) Traffic Congestion: When more people move to towns and cities, one of the major challenges posed is in the transport system. More people means increased number of vehicles which leads to traffic congestion and vehicular pollution. Many people in urban areas drive to work and this creates a severe traffic problem, especially during the rush hours. Also as the cities grow in dimension, people will move to shop and access other social needs/wants which often cause traffic congestion and blockage.

11) Urban Crime: Issues of lack of resources, overcrowding, unemployment, poverty, and lack of social services and education habitually leads to many social problems including violence, drug abuse, and crime. Most of the crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, riots, assault, theft, robbery, and hijacking are reported to be more prominent in the urban vicinities. Besides, poverty related crimes are the highest in fast-growing urban regions. These acts of urban crime normally upset the peace and tranquillity of cities/towns.

Functional classifications of urban centers:

The structure and functions of any region varies in terms of function, history of development as well as age of the town. Some towns and cities specialise in certain functions and they are known for some specific activities, products or services.

• **Administrative towns and cities:** Towns supporting administrative headquarters of higher order are administrative towns, such as Chandigarh, New Delhi, Bhopal, Shillong, Guwahati, Imphal, Srinagar, Gandhinagar, Jaipur Chennai, etc.

• **Industrial towns:** Industries constitute prime motive force of these cities such as Mumbai, Salem, Coimbatore, Modinagar, Jamshedpur, Hugli, Bhilai, etc.

• **Transport Cities:** They may be ports primarily engaged in export and import activities such as Kandla, Kochchi, Kozhikode, Vishakhapatnam, etc. or hubs of inland transport such as Agra, Dhulia, Mughal Sarai, Itarsi, Katni, etc.

• **Commercial towns:** Towns and cities specialising in trade and commerce are kept in this class. Kolkata, Saharanpur, Satna, etc. are some examples.

• **Mining towns:** These towns have developed in mineral rich areas such as Raniganj, Jharia, Digboi, Ankaleshwar, Singrauli, etc.

• **Garrison Cantonment towns:** These towns emerged as garrison towns such as Ambala, Jalandhar, Mhow, Babina, Udhampur, etc.

• **Educational towns:** Starting as centres of education, some of the towns have grown into major campus towns such as Roorki, Varanasi, Aligarh, Pilani, Allahabad etc.

• **Religious and cultural towns:** Varanasi, Mathura, Amritsar, Madurai, Puri, Ajmer, Pushkar, Tirupati, Kurukshetra, Haridwar, Ujjain came to prominence due to their religious/cultural significance.

• **Tourist towns:** Nainital, Mussoorie, Shimla, Pachmarhi, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Udagamandalam (Ooty), Mount Abu are some of the tourist destinations.

Conclusion

The cities are not static in their function. The functions change due to their dynamic nature. Even specialised cities, as they grow into metropolises become multifunctional wherein industry, business, administration, transport, etc. become important. The functions get so intertwined that the city cannot be categorised in a particular functional class.