

B.A.PART-III(SOCIOLOGY) Paper-VI(Urban Sociology)

Topic- City College- MMC,P.U(Department of Soiciology)	By: Dr. Archna kumari Email ID: archnakumari706@gmail.com
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CITY

- **Learning objectives:**

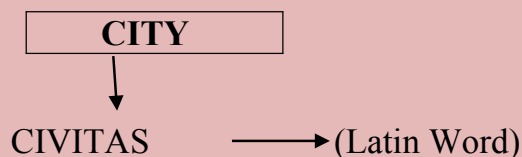
- ✓ To understand the meaning and definitions of city.
- ✓ To explain the characteristics of city.

- **Introduction:**

A city is a relatively large, dense, permanent, heterogeneous, and politically autonomous settlement whose population engages in a range of non agricultural occupations. City culture is aspects of life in a city that people enjoy and regard as valuable. Culture emerges over the history of a city as a result of the shared experiences of its residents. A city may have more than one culture. Once a city comes up, it acquires one or more of the functions depending on a number of factors. According to the Indian census, a migrant is one who is enumerated at a place other than his place of birth. Causes, types and impact of migration are explained.

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A city is basically a big city — the population is large in relation to the amount of land, since people often live in apartments or multi-family housing. The largest city in the world today is Shanghai, China.



A city is a large human settlement. Cities generally have extensive systems for housing, transportation, sanitation, utilities, land use, and communication. Their density facilitates interaction between people, government organizations and businesses, sometimes benefiting different parties in the process.

- **DEFINITION:**

- ❖ According to **Bergal**-“Like many other sociological categories the city is an abstraction, but the element of which it consists-residents, structure, means of transportation, installations, and so on- are concrete entities of varying

nature, what makes the city is the functional integration of its elements into a whole.”

- ❖ According to **W.Sombart**-“city is a place which has become so large that people no longer know each other”
- ❖ According to **Louis wirth**-“ From a sociological point of view a city can be defined as a large, densely inhabited and permanent residence of people with social differences.”

- **Characteristics of city:**

The basic characteristics of urban people (individuality, rationality secular, regimentation, impersonality, heterogeneity) are somehow affected by physical and social conditions of urban life. Urban and rural way of life is contradictory to each other. Urban life has their influence on rural areas, which is now in the process of change. These characteristics are defined by the term ‘urbanism’.

- 1) **Density of population**- The urban areas have high density of population and are physically crowded but socially distant in nature. There is prevalence of nuclear type of family with small house hold size in urban areas. Person per room is often used as an important housing quality indicator measuring how crowded a house/room is? In urban areas there are more persons per room than in rural areas. The urban areas are also characterised by larger share of younger population due to immigration. Generally urban units are larger than the village. People are engaged in manufacturing, mechanical pursuits, trade and commerce, professions and other non-agricultural activities.
- 2) **Community of communities**- According to the noted sociologists MacKenzie, a city is not a mere community but is a super community, that is, it is comprised of several communities. We find a diversity of cultures, religions, and professions in a city.
- 3) **Absence of community feeling**- In as much as a village is as a rule a homogeneous community, there is a feeling of one-ness and fellowship in the village. But in a city where there live heterogeneous communities there is no feeling of one-ness and fellowship among the city dwellers. In short, a city lacks the feeling of communal fellowship which is characteristic of a village.
- 4) **Lack of family unity**- Not only does a city lack the community feeling, but there is absence of the feeling of one-ness and harmony among family members. The father, the mother, the son and the daughter usually are members of their separate clubs and societies and have more kinship with their club members than among themselves.
- 5) **Mobility**-Mobility is an important aspect of urban areas; urbanity and mobility are positively correlated. Urban life is dynamic in nature and it runs with the speed of metro train. The city gives weight on rationality and the people revolve around status, wealth and material possession. The urban

people frequently change their place of jobs for better salary and facilities. The urbanites are clock regulated and are controlled by the traffic lights. Regularity and punctuality are the characteristics of urban life.

- 6) **Diversity**-An urban area has population of myriad caste, culture, ethnic groups, classes and religions. They are not all like, there are heterogeneous population as they differ in the sense of food habits, dressing style, and living conditions. Anonymity is the chief characteristics of an urban area. In urban areas there are more numerous contact and have wider area of interactions. An urban area shows the predominance of secondary, impersonal, relations that exist for short duration of time and man is remembered not by his name but by his numbers and addresses.
- 7) **Moral laxity**- The lack of the community feeling and family unity and kinship coupled with the impact of western civilization have resulted in the fall of moral standards. Due to multitudes of people everywhere it is easy to lead a life of anonymity in the city. Therefore, there is considerable increase in the incidence of pre-marital and extra- marital sexual relations. The easy availability of vulgar entertainment and sex-oriented literature in the cities contribute towards moral laxity.
- 8) **Increase in crimes**- In cities every variety of crime flourishes. The smuggling, defrauding, kidnapping, sexual abuse, abortion, murder, rape, etc, are common occurrences in the cities.
- 9) **Social disorganization**- As a consequence of the above mentioned features, social disorganization starts in the cities. There is general discontent and unrest among city dwellers. There is rise in the expectations of people and leads to a continuous class struggle. All sorts of agitations take place. Communal violence erupts from time to time. The people do not feel secure in spite of the presence of large police force.
- 10) **Marital problems**- in cities the average age of marriage is quite advanced as compared to rural areas. There is no strict institutional control or restraint on pre-marital and extra-marital sex. Many young men and women prefer to stay single as this affords greater freedom and scope to their aims and activities. In cities the incidence of both love marriage and divorce is more than in villages. In cities there is commercial sex-oriented entertainment and professional men and women are available to cater specialized sex needs of people. This obviously contributes to and complicates marital problems.
- 11) **Shortage of houses**- In almost every city the problem of housing accommodation is acute. Lakhs of people are forced to live in human conditions.
- 12) **Artificial and dependent existence**- The life in cities becomes mechanical and is cut off from natural environment. People drink powdered

or bottled milk, eat canned food and go to overcrowded parks to find a stimulant of nature. Though cities produce many variety of goods, they are dependent on villages for the essential foods and vegetables, milk and ghee, etc.

- 13) Morphological characteristics of urban settlements include the structure of city, industrial and market areas, residential area, open areas, religious and cultural centres, parks, playground, down town, and the forested areas.
- 14) There is scarcity of water in urban areas. Most of the urban people get water from a municipal/public or private companies. LPG is the one source of fuel for most of the urban households.
- 15) In urban areas there is more social differentiation and stratification than the rural areas. These stratifications and differentiations are based on the occupational status, economy and skills of an individual. There may be slums of the poor amidst or along luxurious bungalows, towering apartments of the rich people.

- **Conclusion:**

We can say that "A city is distinguished from other human settlements by its relatively great size, but also by its functions and its special symbolic status, which may be conferred by a central authority. The term can also refer either to the physical streets and buildings of the city or to the collection of people who dwell there, and can be used in a general sense to mean urban rather than rural territory. A way of life and meaning that unifies residents of a city with a sense of shared identity.