

Urban settlements

The census of India defines urban settlements as “All places which have municipality, corporation, notified town area committee and have a minimum population of 5000 persons, at least 75% of male population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and a density of population of at least 400 persons per square kilometres.”

The essential of a standard urban area includes

- It should have core town of a minimum population if a size of 50,000.
- The contiguous areas made up of other urban as well as rural administrative units should have close mutual socio- economic links with the core town.
- The probabilities are that the entire area will get fully urbanised in a period of two to three decades.

Basis for classification of urban settlements

Population size: In India, the size of population, density of 400 persons per square km and share of non-agricultural workers are taken into account for classification of urban settlements.

Occupational structure: In India, if more than 50% of its economically productive population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits then the particular region can be termed urban.

Administrative setup: a settlement can be classified as urban if it has a municipality, cantonment etc.

Important terms related to urban settlements

City: The term city is generally applied to large urban places, with no strict definitions to separate it from smaller town. In India, an urban place with more than one lakh population is considered as a city. In some countries, the title city implies a particular status in an administrative hierarchy. City is a nucleated settlement which is multifunctional in character, including an established central business district and both residential and non-residential land uses.

Town: Town is a general name for an urban place, usually a settlement meeting a prescribed minimum population threshold. No specific size range, to distinguish a town from a city, is generally accepted. In countries like UK, USA, Italy a town occupies a particular position within the administrative framework for local government. In general, towns are smaller in size and have lesser functional complexity than cities but still have a nuclear business concentration.

Suburb: A functionally specialized segment of a large urban complex located outside the boundaries of the central city. Suburbs maybe dominantly or exclusively residential, industrial or commercial but by the specialization of their land use and functions, they are not self sufficient. They are part of and correlated with urbanized areas outside their boundaries. They can, however, be independent political entities. Large cities may have many suburbs.

Urbanized area: A continuously built up urban landscape defined by building and population densities with no reference to the political boundaries of the city. It may contain a central city and unincorporated areas. It may be viewed as the physical city and may contain a central city and many contiguous cities, towns, suburbs and other urban tracts.

Metropolitan area: A metropolitan area refers to a large scale functional entity, containing several urbanized areas, discontinuously built up but nonetheless operating as a coherent and integrated economic whole.

Mega city: A city or urban agglomeration having 8 million or more population. At present cities with more than 8 million populations are termed as mega cities. Mexico, Tokyo, London, Paris, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi etc are some examples of mega cities.

Conurbation: The term was coined by Patrick Geddes to define a continuous, extended urban area formed by growing together of several formerly separate and expanding cities. The term has largely been replaced by metropolitan area. There are several conurbations in UK, USA, France and Germany. Trivandrum-Kanyakumari settlement is a growing conurbation. Even Delhi, Modinagar, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar is a developing area for conurbations.

Megalopolis: A word derived from Greek for 'great' and 'city' was used by Jean Gottman to describe the urban pattern of the north-eastern seaboard of USA. He identified a large conurbation-like mass of linked built up areas from north Boston in New Hampshire to Norfolk in Virginia.

Central business district: The nucleus of the urban area containing the major concentration of commercial land uses. This concentration is associated with both the most accessible point in the city and its peak land value. The CBD has the most intensive land use and the tallest buildings in the city; its restricted area often displays considerable areal differentiation of separate land uses, the segregation of which reflects the search for external economies.

References:

Human geography, Majid Husain.

http://www.arthapedia.in/index.php%3Ftitle%3DUrban_Agglomeration