



SYM 101 SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

UNIT : 03

TOPIC : URBAN COMMUNITY PART-I

Content

Concept of Urban Community; Administrative Definition of City; Geographical Boundaries of Urban Areas

Features of Urban Community

Advantages and Disadvantages of City Life

Problem of Urban Community



Introduction

The '**urban community**' means the **city community**. "The history of every Civilization is the history, not of its countryside, but of its cities and towns. Civilization means the city, and the city means civilization. Man, originally built the city, and the city, in turn, civilized man." Man became a citizen when he became a member of a **city-state**. With the rise of the world-city, as **Oswald Spengler**(*The Decline of the West, 1918*) tells us, "There are no longer nobles and bourgeoisie, freemen and slaves, Hellenes and Barbarians, believers and nonbelievers, but only cosmopolitans and provincials. All other contrasts pale before this one, which dominates all events, all habits of life, all views of the world."

The city is culture par excellence; it is the epitome of culture. It is mankind's greatest work of art—and of artifice—because it contains all others. Culture, a manufactured environment, surrounds the city man. “It is an environment of bricks and steel and mortar and cement, of bridges and tunnels, of sidewalks and streets, of monuments and buildings, of elevators and subway platforms.” The city is the product of man and his own achievement. The city “has everything that is ‘tawdry’ and everything sublime. It holds both hope and despair. It encompasses millions of people, and it can be the loveliest place on earth... It is a vital center of every civilized society... It is both a place and a state of mind.”— **Robert Bierstedt (The Social Order, 1957)**





“Cities are places where large numbers of people live and work; they are hubs of the government, commerce and transportation.” ---**United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018.**



“The confederation or union of neighbouring clans resorting to a center used as a common meeting place for worship, protection and the like; hence, the political or sovereign body formed by such a community.”



“An urban area can also be defined as a composite of cells, neighbourhoods, or communities where people work together for common good.”--- **Gallion and Eisner, The Urban Pattern: City Planning & Design, 2003**

“Urban areas are those locations where there is opportunity for a diversified living environment and diverse lifestyles. People live, work, and enjoy themselves in social and cultural relationships provided by the proximities of an urban area.”

“The word city implies a concentration of people in a given geographic area who support themselves on a fairly permanent basis from the economic activities of that area. The city can be the center of industry, trade, education, government, or involve all these activities.”--- **Gallion and Eisner, 2003.**

- “The city is a **related collection of primary groups and purposive associations**...these varied groups support themselves through economic organizations that are likewise of a more or less corporate, or at least publicly regulated, character, and they are all housed in permanent structures, within a relatively limited area.”
- “The city is in its complete sense,...is a geographic lexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theatre of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity.”
- One may describe the city, in its social aspect, as a special framework directed toward the creation of differentiated opportunities for a common life and a significant collective drama.”---**Mumford, 1937.**

- “For sociological purposes a city may be defined as a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals.”----**Louis Wirth, Urbanism as Way of Life, 1938.**
- Weber’s definition is more historically and institutionally specific, focusing on the conditions under which a settlement could be considered a “city” as an autonomous political and economic entity---**Max Weber, City, 1921.**



- For Weber, a **full urban community (especially the Occidental city)** typically possessed:
 - **Fortification:** A defensive wall.
 - **Market:** A central place for economic exchange.
 - **A law code and court system of its own:** Judicial and legal autonomy.
 - **A related form of association:** A sense of municipal corporateness or citizenship (e.g., guilds, burghers).
 - **At least partial autonomy and autocephaly:** Self-governance with authorities in whose election the citizens participated.



• **Simmel (1903 – “The Metropolis and Mental Life”):** viewed the city (the metropolis) as characterized by:

- **Intensification of Nervous Stimuli:** The sheer volume of sensory input in the city forces individuals to adapt by developing a "blasé attitude" – a desensitization to differentiate between things, leading to indifference.
- **Rationality and Intellectuality:** City life fosters a more calculating, rational, and intellectual approach to interactions, as opposed to the emotional and sentimental life of smaller communities. This is often driven by the money economy, which is impersonal and objective.

- **Freedom and Anonymity:** The city offers unprecedented personal freedom from the social structures of smaller towns but at the cost of anonymity and the weakening of personal bonds.
- **Specialization:** The extensive division of labor in the city leads to highly specialized individual functions.
- Simmel was less concerned with the physical definition of the city and more with its psychological and social consequences for the individual, particularly the tension between individual freedom and alienation.

Conceptual Understanding of Cities

Population

Density

Administrative

Economic

Character

Geographical
Area

Administrative Definition Used by Various Countries

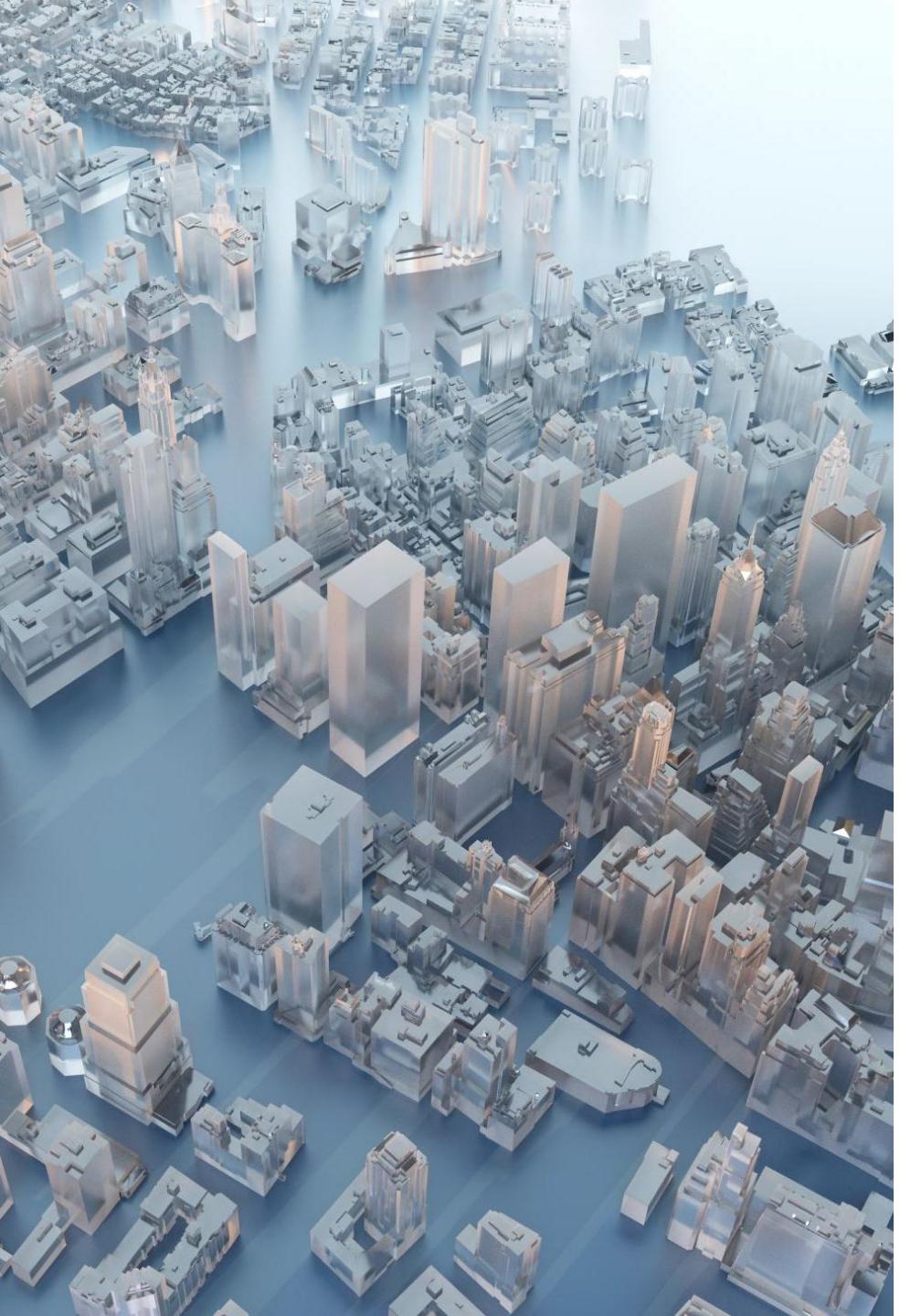
- ❑ **Simplified Rural-Urban Classification:** Government agencies and social scientist simplified rural-urban classification based on readily available statistics such as population size, administrative boundaries, and proportion of adult population in non-agricultural occupations---**Dorelien and Xu, 2020**
- ❑ **Key Reference: Census Reports:** Mostly the classification adopted for urban areas by each country is provided in the census document.
- ❑ **Classification of Urban Settlements in India:** Uses administrative, population, density, economic aspect: **Classification of urban settlements as per Census of India 2011 identifies---**
 - **First Category:** All places with a Municipality, Corporation, Cantonment Board or Notified Area Committee as **Statutory Town**
 - These towns are notified under law by the concerned State/UT Government and have local bodies like Municipal Corporation, Municipalities, Municipal Committees, irrespective of their demographic characteristics.



Administrative Definition Used by Various Countries

➤ The **second category** of Towns is known as **Census Towns**, which includes:

- a) A minimum population of 5,000
- b) Atleast 75 percent of male working population engaged in non-working agricultural pusuits
- c) A density of population of atleast 400 persons per sq. km.



Geographical Boundaries of Urban Areas and Terminologies

- **Multiple Boundary Definition for Urban Areas:** No standardized international criteria exist for determining the boundaries of a city and often multiple boundary definitions are available for a given city.
 - **City Proper:** Describes city according to an administrative boundary
 - **Urban agglomeration:** Considers the extent of the contiguous urban area, or built-up area, to delineate the city's boundaries
 - **Metropolitan area:** Defines its boundaries according to the degree of economic and social interconnectedness of nearby areas, identified by interlinked commerce or commuting patterns-----**United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019**

Classification of Urban Areas and Local Governing Bodies: URPDI Guidelines, 2015

S.No.	Classification	Sub-category	Population Range	Governing Local Authority
1	Small Town	Small Town I	5,000-20,000	Nagar Panchayat
		Small Town II	20,000-50,000	Nagar Panchayat/Municipal Council
2	Medium Town	Medium Town I	50,000-1,00,000	Municipal Council
		Medium Town II	1 lakh to 5 lakh	Municipal Council
3	Large City	---	5 lakh to 10 lakh	Municipal Corporation
4	Metropolitan City	Metropolitan City I	10 lakh to 50 lakh	Municipal Corporation/Metropolitan Planning Committee
		Metropolitan City II	50 lakh to 1 crore	-Same-
5	Megapolis	---	More than 1 crore	-Same-



Meaning of Urban Community

- Urban Community life represents the city-life. Though the term 'Urban' popularity used, it is not properly defined. There is no single all-inclusive definition of a city or urban community.
- The urban sociologist **Howard Woolston** in his '**Metropolis: A Study of Urban Communities**', defined the city as a "limited geographic area, inhabited by a largely and closely settled population, having many common interests and institutions, under a local government authorized by the State."
- **Park** in his "**The City**" says that the city far from being a mere collection of individuals and of social conveniences is rather a "state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these customs."

James A. Quinn in his **“Urban Sociology”** viewed the city as a "phenomenon of specialization", as a population aggregate whose occupations are non-agricultural.

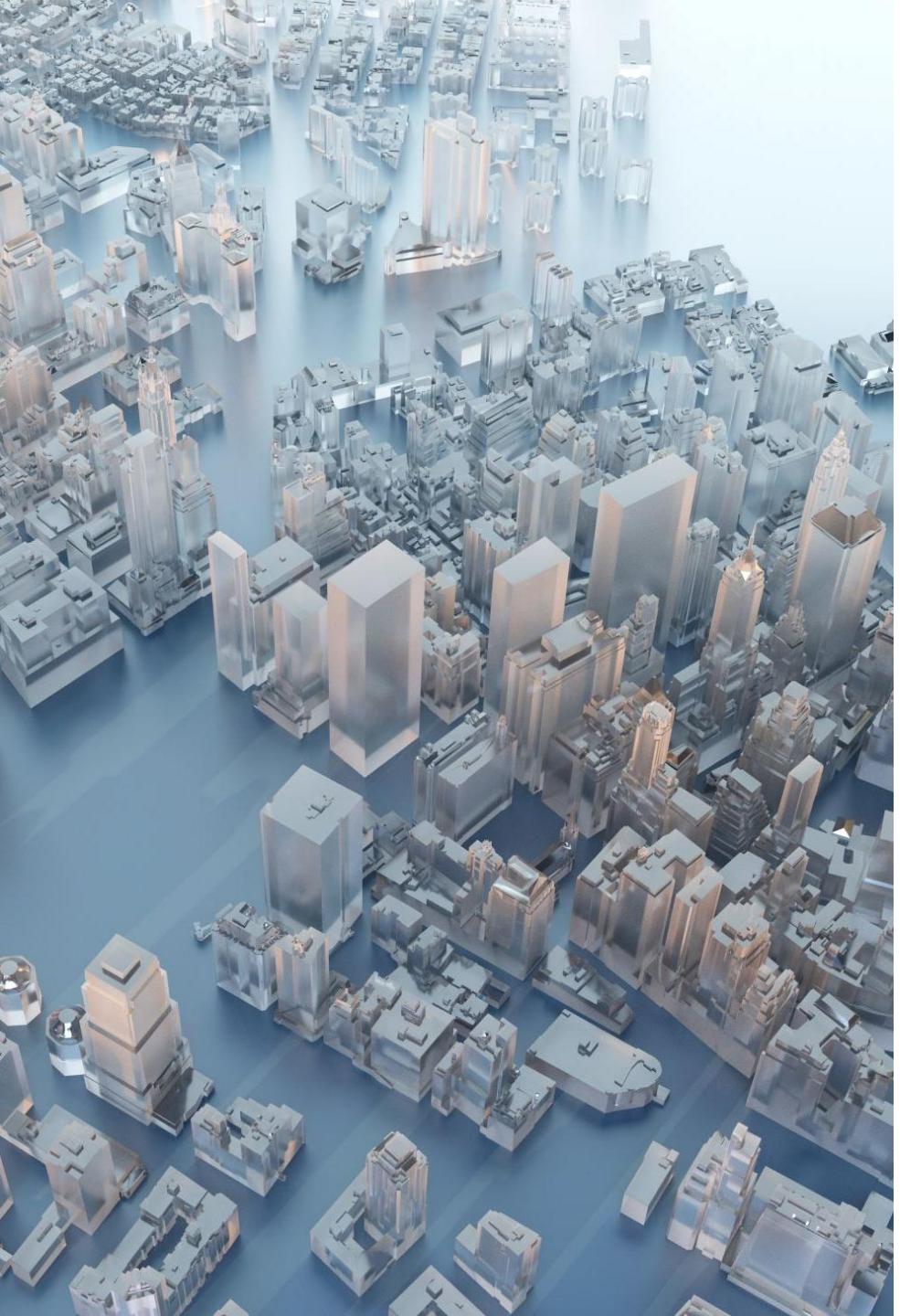
Adna F. Weber in his **“The Growth of Cities”** defined the city as any incorporated place with a minimum of 10,000 inhabitants.



Though some sociologists have tried to define the concept of 'urban' no one has given a satisfactory definition so far. **Bergel** writes, "Everybody seems to know what a city is, but no one has given a satisfactory definition." **Kingsley Davis** writes, "Much ink has been wasted in trying to define urban". **MacIver** remarks, the two (urban and rural communities) there is no sharp demarcation to tell where the city ends and country beings." Every village possesses some elements of the city while every city carries some features of the villages. Different criteria are used to decide a community as an urban. Some of them are population, legal limits, types of occupations, social organization.

Characteristics of Urban Community

- Social Heterogeneity
- Secondary Relations
- The Anonymity of the city life
- Secondary Control
- Large- Scale Division of Labour and Specialization
- Large Scale Social Mobility
- Individualism
- Voluntary Association
- Social Tolerance
- Spatial Segregation
- Unstable Family



Advantages of City Life

- ❖ The city offers **opportunities and facilities** for making full use of one's abilities and talents.
- ❖ It can make life joyful and comfortable. Major Service agencies are centralized in the city to **satisfy various interests of the people** such as work, education, recreation and politics.
- ❖ It encourages **new ideas and inventions**
- ❖ It quickens **social movements and enlarges social contacts**; Social mobility becomes easier.

- ❖ There is **less social distance** being kept among people of different castes, races and religions. Hence there is more tolerance towards others.
- ❖ The city is **dynamic**. This dynamism contributes to social changes. The city has liberated women from the exclusiveness of domesticity. It has made women to stand on an equal footing with men.
- ❖ The city provides **various means of recreation**. In a city there is scope for personal advancement. The multifarious associations of the city cater to the multiple needs, interests and tastes of the people, that is why, as Quinn says, "the great civilizations of antiquity—Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman,—were cradled in cities, that urban communities typically have led in the creation of art, the advancement of science, and the dissemination of learning.

Disadvantages of city life

- ❖ The city makes **life materialistic and mechanical**. It takes away from man his human aspect.
- ❖ **Secondary relations are dominant in the city**. People are indifferent towards one another. Superficial forms of politeness and manners are commonly found. There is lack of intimacy and privacy in the city.
- ❖ The city has made the people to become **individualistic, selfish, rationalistic and calculative**. Relations are commercialised. All relations are means to means and to no final ends.



- ❖ The city has posed a **challenge to family**. The urban family is in doldrums. Individualism is ripening within it. Divorce, desertion and separation are increasing. Joint family has disappeared. The family size has become very limited.
- ❖ Social control is complex and less effective in the city. **Instances of social deviance are more** in the city.
- ❖ The city has made the **life to become uncertain, insecure, and competitive**. The city is said to be the centre of economic insecurity, mental illness, gambling, prostitution, drunkenness, crime, juvenile delinquency, etc. Concentration of people in the city creates problems of housing, water and electricity facility, over crowdedness, insanitation, etc. The cities are condemned as 'abnormal seed-beds of sin, scepticism, greed, crime, misery, filth and congestion'. It is branded as the centre of 'corruption, vice and misery.

Urban Problems

The **process of industrialization** has added much to the phenomenal growth of cities. Due to the rapid industrialization cities have grown in an unsystematic manner. Industrialization and urbanizations have brought along with them many vices.

The Problem of Concentration. Concentration of people in a definite limited space is one of the problems of the urban society. Due to the attraction of city life ('Pull-factors') men have started flocking towards the cities. Lack of job opportunities in the rural societies ('Push '-factor) also forced people to desert villages and start moving to the cities. This has led to urban concentration and rural depopulation.

The Problem of Facilities. Concentration of people has resulted in other problems such as overcrowding, congestion, housing problems, lack of water facility and fresh air, insanitation, etc.

The Problem of Slums. Increasing industrialisation and urbanisation have created slums in the city. The slum dwellers live in horrible areas. Their living conditions are really unfortunate. The low-paid workers live in these slum areas. The facilities that are found in the cities are not found in these places. Slums consist of sub-standard, ill-ventilated, insanitary and poorly lighted houses. They consist of houses which are unfit for human habitation.

The Problem of Privacy. Lack of privacy and intimacy are the natural outcome of the city life. Due to the indirect and impersonal relationships, closeness and intimacy will not develop. Life becomes mechanical, competitive and charmless.



The Problem of Vices. The city is a center of economic insecurity, mental illness, gambling, prostitution, drunkenness, crimes, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, environment pollution and such other vices. There is poverty during plenty. The city life endangers the physical, mental and moral health of the people.

The Problem of Individuation. The urban community encourages individuation. Individuals are moved by their own aspirations, ambitions, aims, and interests. They have become more and more career-conscious. They are invariably caught in the competitive race for a successful career. The competitiveness of the city, places one over against everyone else. The materialistic outlook that a city-dweller develops may often result in what is known as the 'loss of community'. An individual may become 'alienated' from his own community, his own people, his own profession. This state, when it reaches the extreme, may drive a depressed and an 'alienated' man to commit suicide.



Thank You