

## Types and Characteristics of Urban Settlements.

Urban settlements must be viewed as an organic whole which is composed of the interrelationship between and among the economic, social, cultural and political aspects. The geographer, however is concerned with the relationship between these relationships and the four key functions of dwelling, work, recreation and transport and how these affect the physical and social structure of the town.

Based on their stages of evolution and associated characteristics, urban settlements may be identified as towns, cities, metropolises or conurbations. A settlement that passes through each stage of evolution would usually emerge from a hamlet, to a village and then move on to evolve as a town depending upon the nature of services and functions and subsequently to a city. All cities do not move to the stage of "metropolis" - it is mostly dependent upon the nature of urban economy and its "pull factors". However, a typology of cities necessitates the ~~best~~ understanding of the stages of evolution of urban settlement along with the major characteristics as



## a) Towns :-

Towns emerge in 2 primary ways  
(i) They often evolve from large villages which have gradually acquired urban characteristics!

(ii) Towns may be planned as industrial towns, satellite towns, etc.

The characteristics of towns mark the first level of transition from villages. Some of the characteristics are as follows.

⇒ they support higher densities of pop.

⇒ a higher proportion of population is occupied in non-agricultural activities

⇒ there are higher densities of built-up structures,

⇒ slightly higher number of metalled roads that imply better connectivity.

⇒ a more diverse market,

⇒ a higher level of infrastructure

⇒ a place of recreation like parks etc.



B) City:- Lewis Mumford (1938) defined city is the highest and most complex types of associative life. It exemplifies the dominant elements of towns to a much greater extent. Cities signify the key elements of the economic and cultural realms of the region where they are located and usually display the best works of art and architecture in its built up spaces and forms. With gradual progress in urbanisation, cities become more complex attain the status of a metropolis.

C) Metropolis:- The metropolitan area is more spread out. The region surrounds the core of the city i.e. its single or multiple CBD and incorporates the adjoining urban regions which have formed due to continuous amalgamation of urban functions and services.

D) Megalopolis:- The megalopolis is defined by its poly-nuclear characterics, where large cities are joined by a continuous chain or complex of cities. E.g Boston-New York (USA) where the 240 km in b/w two cities consists of several cities. It was coined by Jean Gottman. Second example is Japan-Tokaido Megalopolis.

E) Conurbation:- It was coined by Patrick Geddes to describe constellation of cities sprawling together.