

Lesson- 4

Settlement : Rural and Urban Life



Learning outcomes :

The students will–

- ✦ know the salient features of human life in rural settlement.
- ✦ have an idea of the character of human life in an urban settlement.
- ✦ acquire knowledge on the different categories of towns.
- ✦ understand the process of urbanization.
- ✦ have a brief idea about the major towns in Assam.
- ✦ gain an understanding of the various problems associated with towns and cities.

You have already learnt about settlement in the previous lesson. A settlement can be broadly divided into two- rural and urban settlement. The lifestyle, socio-cultural norms of people living in rural and urban settlement respectively are different. In this lesson, an attempt has been made to impart some idea on the characteristics of lifestyle in rural and urban settlement, urbanization, problems of towns and cities, etc.

Characteristics of lifestyle in Rural Settlements :

The nomadic life of man changed with the beginning of agriculture. This means man started to settle permanently for agricultural activities by forming villages. Generally, around 75 percent or more of the total population in rural area are engaged in agricultural activities. In the rural areas of Assam, people cultivate rice, jute, mustard seed, sesame, pulses and a variety of vegetables. Apart from cultivation, people in villages also make a living by fishing, poultry farming, domesticating animals, trade and services etc. Agriculture in Assam is dependent on nature. Application of technology in agriculture is still limited here. The people in villages organize various religious functions, celebrations etc. based on agriculture. Such functions and religious ceremonies etc. are attached with the rural life.

Write Answer :

- ✦ What are the different activities performed by the people living in rural areas to earn their living.

People in villages normally follow certain social rules and regulations and traditions. Feeling of belongingness, love and care, brotherhood, co-ordination are very strong amongst them. The relations among the different families help in uniting the villagers. They share amongst themselves many things of day to day use along with various tools for cultivation, Social institutions, such as Namghar, Masjid, Church, Club etc., exist in a village. Any conflict or problems arising amongst

the people are solved through open discussions. Even though the standard of living in a village is not as high as in the town but the villages are much ahead in terms of food production. Of late it can be noticed that some villages just like towns enjoy the facilities of communication, transportation and other facilities. In such villages we can notice the characteristics of town.

Activity :

- ✦ On what factors agriculture of Assam depends?
- ✦ Discuss the reasons why majority of the people in a village are engaged in agriculture.

Characteristics of lifestyle in Urban Settlement :

Generally, an urban settlement develops surrounding trade and commerce, craft industry etc. Around 75 percent or more people in a town are involved in industry, trade and various services. The central part of a town is the centre of trade and commerce. Bank, wholesale and retail trading centres, various commercial centres, etc. are situated here. Various types of offices, educational institutions, industry etc. develop around this centre. These institutions are closely linked to the life and activities of people living in the town. With increasing population in a town, there is scarcity of land. Growing population also results in an increasing demand for all types of



Fig : 4.1 Busy Urban Area

necessary commodities in a town. Consequently, there is a rise in prices of some goods. People are forced to be kept engaged in different activities for more income. There are better facilities of education and health in towns. Mode of transport is good as well. Here, the scope for employment is more because of the presence of educational institutions, industry, mills, public and private offices, etc.

There exist, local administrations like municipal corporation, town committee, etc. in towns and they administer urban settlement, vehicular transport etc. Urban areas have better facilities for entertainment. People in towns get to enjoy their leisure in theatre halls, cinema halls, zoo, park, sports grounds or stadiums, etc.

Urbanization Process :

Activities associated with rural settlement changes with the passage of time. Various changes are taking place in rural lifestyle with the progress in science and technology, growth of population, modernization of agriculture, setting of industries, etc. Unique location of a village can transform it from an agricultural village to a small trade centre. For example, discovery of mineral resource such as coal, petroleum, etc. in a rural area can lead to the creation of an industrial township in that area. Setting up of any industrial or commercial institution in a place generates employment avenues for its local people. Moreover, people from neighbouring areas migrate into that place in search of employment and as a result, the population of the place starts increasing. Subsequently,

facilities such as transport, health, education, trade, power, water supply, etc., for the residents increases as well. In this manner, places having special resources and advantages can transform into towns and cities. In Assam, the townships of Duliajan, Ledo and Digboi were created in this manner. Sometimes some towns can be created directly for certain specific industry. Tata, Bhillai, Barauni are such types of towns. Similarly, Tirupati, Puri are religious towns; Vellore is a medical township, Darjeeling, Mussorie etc. have developed as tourist towns. Such process of transformation of rural settlement into urban settlement or further expansion of small towns into big towns is called the process of urbanization. As a result of urbanization, the economic activities, demographic structure, customs and language etc. of a place also changes.

Let us know :

Some cities in India that has developed fast due to urbanisation are (including percentage of urbanisation)-

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Surat (Gujarat) 9.18% | 6. Tiruppur (Tamil Nadu) 8.36% |
| 2. Bengaluru (Karnataka) 8.90% | 7. Rajkot (Gujarat) 8.33% |
| 3. Agra (Uttar Pradesh) 8.50% | 8. Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu) 8.29% |
| 4. Hyderabad (Telangana) 8.47% | 9. Chennai (Tamil Nadu) 8.20% |
| 5. Nagpur (Maharashtra) 8.41% | 10. Vijaywada (Karnataka) 8.16% |

Population is considered as the main basis of urbanization. In almost every country, the respective census department sets the size of population for a place to become a town. The population size of towns in different countries differ from one another. In India, this figure is 5,500 persons, 2,500 persons in USA and 30,000 persons in Japan. Apart from population, towns can be categorized on the basis of the different types of municipal bodies. A municipal area having a small population and limited functions is generally called a town. In our country, a municipal area having more than 1 lakh population is called a City. Urban settlement with population of one million to 5 million is called a Metropolis. On the other hand, a Megalopolis is a conurbation of big and small towns surrounding a major city.

Activity :

- ★ Take help from your teacher and try to find out the following information about your nearest town- (a) Population (b) History of nomenclature (c) Historical importance (d) Institutions etc.

Different categories of towns :

History of evolution of towns in India is old. Information relating to development of towns in India can be traced back to prehistoric times. Two ancient towns of Harappa and Mohenjodaro have been discovered in the Indus Valley. On the basis of period of evolution, Indian towns can be divided into three categories : Ancient towns, Medieval towns and Modern towns. Varanasi, Prayag, Puri, Madurai, etc. are ancient towns. Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Agra, Nagpur,

etc. are example of medieval towns. Such ancient and medieval towns mainly developed on religious and cultural grounds. On the other hand, the Britishers and other Europeans in India helped to develop towns like Surat, Goa, Bombay (Mumbai), Madras (Chennai), Calcutta (Kolkata) etc. for administrative and trade purpose. Similarly after independence, modern towns started developing such as Chandigarh, Bhopal, Chattisgarh, Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Dispur, (Guwahati) etc. primarily as state headquarters or for administrative purpose.

On the basis of the cause of development and its functions, towns can be categorised as follows- a) Administrative towns, (b) Commercial towns, (c) Industrial towns, (d) Tourist towns, (e) Transport centric towns, (f) Cultural towns, (g) Mining towns, (h) Garrison towns, (i) Educational towns and (j) Historical towns. Although some towns might have evolved due to some specific cause, they may develop in other aspects as well with the passage of time.

Let us know :

Twin Cities: When two nearby cities are twinned with another cities is called Twin cities. For example: Hyderabad-Secunderabad, Kolkata-Howrah. Some towns in Assam developed on the basis of different origins and functions. For example: Commercial town- Tinsukia, Industrial town- Digboi, Tourist town- Tezpur, Transport centric town- Rangiya.

Activity :

- ★ Name a town of historical importance in Assam and describe briefly its heritage and famous monuments.

Major towns of Assam :

Assam is basically an agrarian state. Still now, around 70 percent of the people in Assam are engaged in agriculture and other primary activities. The number of towns in Assam is gradually increasing for various reasons such as growing population, creation of new district and sub-division etc. There are 80 full fledged towns in Assam administered by municipal administration. Although there are many towns in Assam with a population of 1 lakh or more, only Guwahati has been recognized as a city. Only the city of Guwahati has a Municipal Corporation. Guwahati is the centre for trade and commerce, education, administration, health services, other institutions, transport, entertainment, etc. for the entire state.

Activity :

- ★ Try to gather information about the history of a major town in your district and prepare a short note on it.

Majority of the towns in Assam are located in the Brahmaputra Valley. Most of them were mainly created as administrative towns. As such majority of them are district or sub-divisional

head quarters. Out of these, many towns are the heart of economic, educational and cultural activities. Hence Guwahati, Tezpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Silchar, Diphu, etc. are worth mentioning. Look at the map given below. With the help of it you will get to know the location of the major towns in Assam.



Fig : 4.2 Some towns of Assam administered by Municipality

Activity

- ✦ Discuss the advantages of a town located by the side of a river.

Problems created in towns :

Population grows rapidly in towns. With growing population in towns, various problems evolve. It is quite natural that increasing number of people exert different types of pressure on the limited lands of the towns. Demand for land increases not only for settlement purpose but also for constructing roads, shops, industries, institutions, etc. Due to migration of people to the towns for different reasons, more people have to live in a limited space. Such unplanned expansion of towns deteriorates the physical environment and various problems start evolving.

Growing population results in a fast increase in the number of vehicles. Due to narrow roads inside the towns vehicles can create huge traffic jams. Construction of houses along the hill slopes, wetlands, natural drains etc. leads to stagnation of water causing flash floods. Open spaces (such as parks, sports ground etc.) play an important role in keeping environment clean and healthy and provide the residents of the town with some sources of relaxation. Again, commercial towns produce lots of wastes and the environment becomes very unhealthy. Misuse

of the rivers, drains etc. in a town by a section of its residents for dumping garbage damages their natural appearance and functions.

In order to improve the mode of life of village and town people, the Government has introduced two schemes- National Rural Livelihood Mission and National Urban Livelihood Mission. The main reasons for introducing these schemes are:

- a. To provide financial assistance to poor people.
- b. To provide employment opportunities to skillful person.
- c. To increase domestic income etc.

Shortage of drinking water is another problem. The towns do not have sufficient provision for supply of safe drinking water to its people in the towns. Smoke emitted from the industries and vehicles and also excessive noises disturb the people of the towns. It is very important to make a proper planning based on the geographical environment of the town in advance to check the problem. Continuous expansion of towns in unplanned manner will make it unsuitable for human being at some point of time. Hence, for better maintenance of the urban environment, not only the residents of the town but all the other relevant departments should also remain alert.

Let us remember

- ✦ Based on agriculture man began to settle down permanently and villages are formed.
- ✦ About 75 percent or more of the people in rural settlement make a living by getting engaged in agriculture.
- ✦ Urban settlement develops based on trade and commerce, industry and craft etc.
- ✦ More than 75 percent of the people in a town make a living through industry, trade, service and other income generating activities
- ✦ Municipal Corporation, town committee, etc. play a significant role in urban living.
- ✦ Indian towns can be categorised as ancient, medieval and modern towns.
- ✦ There are 80 towns in Assam under municipal administration.

- ✦ Majority of the towns in Assam are located by the side of the river Brahmaputra.
- ✦ Although there are many towns in Assam with a population of one lakh or more, Guwahati has been recognized as a city. There is a municipal corporation only in Guwahati.
- ✦ Most of the towns in Assam have developed as administrative towns. As such, majority of the towns are district or Sub-divisional headquarters.
- ✦ Although a town may be created for a specific cause, its other aspects develop with the passage of time.

Exercises

1. Write answers :

- (a) Settlement can be divided into how many types?
- (b) What percent of people in the rural areas are involved in agriculture?
- (c) What type of activity is basically associated with the central part of a town?
- (d) Into how many categories can Indian towns be divided on the basis of period of development?
- (e) What should be the minimum population of a town in India as per census department ?
- (f) Name the only city in Assam being administered by a Municipal Corporation?

2. Write true or false—

- (a) Density is more in rural settlement than in urban settlement.
- (b) Majority of the people in rural settlement are service holders.
- (c) New Delhi is an administrative town.
- (d) Agra is situated by the side of a river.
- (e) Silchar is situated on the bank of the river Barak.

3. Write short answers—

- (a) Occupations in rural areas.
- (b) Advantages of urban settlement.
- (c) What are the reasons of the dense settlement pattern in towns?
- (d) What is a Megalopolis?

4. Prepare two separate tables citing advantages and problems of towns.

5. With the help of an atlas name any ten towns of Assam and mention the districts in which they are situated.

6. Record the educational qualifications and occupations of the members of ten families residing in your locality and prepare a detailed report.

7. Identify the location of newly announced districts by looking at the map of Assam.

