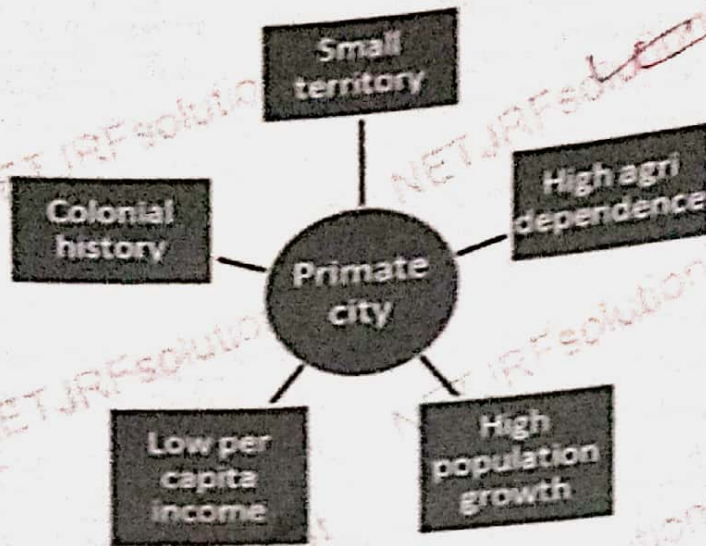


■ Primate City by Mark Jefferson

The law of primate city was developed by Mark Jefferson in 1939. It is based on the observation that the country's leading city is usually disproportionately larger than others in the system. For example, London seven times the size of Liverpool, Copenhagen nine times larger than Aarhus, and Mexico City five times the size of Guadalajara. In other words, a primate city has a stratum of small towns dominated by a very large city with an absence of intermediate centres. Jefferson noted that the ratio of the population of the three largest cities, is approximately 100:30:20 (i.e., the third largest is one-fifth the size of the largest). According to Jefferson, the largest city has the pre-eminence in infrastructure, economic, social and political affairs. Primate cities are found almost in all countries- developed or developing. The factors responsible for the primacy and degree of primacy in each one of them vary.

The main causes for the development of primate cities are:

1. Small territorial extent of the country,
2. Relatively high density of population,
3. Low per capita income,
4. A high degree of dependence upon agricultural exports,
5. High rates of population growth, and
6. In many cases, a formal colonial status. Many of these attributes are, of course, typical of developing countries.

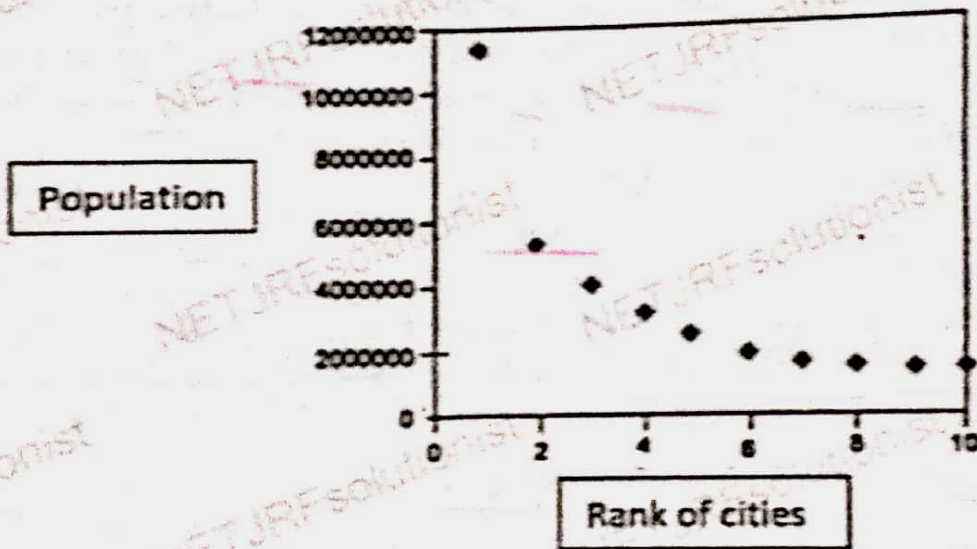


The ranking is in descending order, 1 denoting the position of the largest settlement. The population of each settlement is defined as the population of the largest divided by the rank of the settlement under consideration. If the largest city in a country contains 1,000,000 people, the second largest contain 500,000, the third largest 333,333 and so on, which produces an inverted-shaped relationship between rank and population.

This curve has the following form:

$$P_r = P_1/r$$

Where P is the population, r is rank order position and 1 is the rank order position.



The primate cities are mainly found in small countries. For example, Reykjavik in Iceland, Copenhagen in Denmark, Kathmandu in Nepal, Lago in Nigeria, Lima in Peru, La Paz in Bolivia, Quito in Ecuador, Caracas in Venezuela and Bogota in Colombia.

Following factor are responsible for creation of primate cities:

1. Countries with a colonial history also have primate cities. For example, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Maldiv, Kenya, Ethiopia, etc.
2. Export-oriented economy. A country which is dependent on export of raw materials shows the tendency of primacy.

3. Simple economic and political economy lead to primacy. Countries with small areas and population, low per capita incomes and agriculture as the basic economic activity also have a tendency towards primacy.
4. The cities of Khartoum (Sudan), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Mogadishu (Somalia), Kinshasa (Zaire), Nairobi (Kenya), Montevideo (Uruguay), Mexico City (Mexico) are some of such examples.
5. Countries having dual economy (partly labour-intensive and partly capital-intensive) also have primate cities. Dual economies in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand have been responsible for making Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Colombo and Bangkok primate cities.

Primate city in India

There is no primate city in India at the national level at present. The absence of primate city is partly explained by the large size of the country. No city in India exercise dominance over the entire nation. At the state level, however, there are primate cities in fifteen out of the twenty-nine states. Several large states, such as West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have primate cities, which have population at least three times the population of the second-ranking city. Among the smaller states, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura show a distinct tendency towards city primacy. In the Valley of Kashmir, the city of Srinagar has the status of a primate city. Primate city characteristics are absent in the northern states, from Orissa, and Bihar in the east to Rajasthan and Punjab in the west.