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***Mala Moni Kalita, Asstt. Prof***

**HUMAN SETTLEMENT- RURAL AND URBAN SETTLEMENTS**

**Human Settlement**: Human Settlement is a form of human habitation which ranges from a single dowelling to large city. In other words, it is a process of opening up and settling of a previously uninhabited area by the people. People live in clusters of houses that might be a village, a town or a city. The study of human settlements is basic to human geography because the form of settlement in any particular region reflects human relationship with the environment. A human settlement is defined as a place inhabited more or less permanently. The houses may be designed or redesigned, buildings may be altered, functions may change but settlement continues in time and space. There may be some settlements which are temporary and are occupied for short periods, may be a season.

**Rural Settlements:** The rural settlements are concerned with the degree of dispersion of the dwellings and the life is supported by land based primary economic activities. Rural people are less mobile and therefore, social relations among them are intimate. In India, the rural settlement varies with the diversity of climatic condition in India that is compact or clustered village of a few hundred houses is a rather universal feature, particularly in the northern plains. However, there are several areas, which have other forms of rural settlements. There are various factors and conditions responsible for having different types of rural settlements in India which is given below:

• Physical features – nature of terrain, altitude, climate and availability of water

• Cultural and ethnic factors – social structure, caste and religion

• Security factors – defence against thefts and robberies.

**Rural settlements in India:**

• Clustered, agglomerated or nucleated: It is a compact or closely built up area of houses. In this type of village the general living area is distinct and separated from the surrounding farms, barns and pastures.

• Semi-clustered or fragmented: These types of settlements may result from tendency of clustering in a restricted area of dispersed settlement. More often such a pattern may also result from segregation or fragmentation of a large compact village.

• Hamleted: Sometimes settlement is fragmented into several units physically separated from each other bearing a common name. These units are locally called panna, para, palli, nagla, dhani, etc. in various parts of the country. This segmentation of a large village is often motivated by social and ethnic factors.

• Dispersed or isolated: This pattern of settlement appears in the form of isolated huts or hamlets of few huts in remote jungles, or on small hills with farms or pasture on the slopes. Extreme dispersion of settlement is often caused by extremely fragmented nature of the terrain and land resource base of habitable areas.

**Urban settlements:** Urban settlements are generally compact and larger in size and engaged in a variety of non-agricultural, economic and administrative functions. As mentioned earlier, cities are functionally linked to rural areas around them. Thus, exchange of goods and services is performed sometimes directly and sometimes through a series of market towns and cities. Thus, cities are connected directly as well as indirectly with the villages and also with each other.

**Evolution of Towns in India:**

Since prehistoric times, towns flourished in India. During the time of Indus valley civilisation, towns like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were in existed. The following period has witnessed evolution of towns. It continued with periodic ups and downs until the arrival of Europeans in India in the eighteenth century. On the basis of their evolution in different periods, Indian towns may be classified as:

Ancient Towns: There are number of towns in India having historical background spanning over 2000 years. Most of them developed as religious and cultural centres. Varanasi is one of the important towns among these. Prayag (Allahabad), Pataliputra (Patna), Madurai are some other examples of ancient towns in the country.

Medieval Towns: About 100 of the existing towns have their roots in the medieval period. Most of them developed as headquarters of principalities and kingdoms. These are fort towns which came up on the ruins of ancient towns. Important among them are Delhi, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Agra and Nagpur.

• Modern Towns: The British and other Europeans have developed a number of towns in India. Starting their foothold on coastal locations, they first developed some trading ports such as Surat, Daman, Goa, Pondicherry, etc. The British later consolidated their hold around three principal nodes – Mumbai (Bombay), Chennai (Madras), and Kolkata (Calcutta) – and built them in the British style. Rapidly extending their domination either directly or through control over the princely states, they established their administrative centres, hill towns as summer resorts, and added new civil administrative and military areas to them. Towns based on modern industries also evolved after 1850. Jamshedpur can be cited as an example.

After independence, a large number of towns have been developed as administrative headquarters, e.g. Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar, Gandhinagar, Dispur, etc. and industrial centres such as Durgapur, Bhilai, Sindri, Barauni. Some old towns also developed as satellite towns around metropolitan cities such as Ghaziabad, Rohtak, Gurgaon around Delhi. With increasing investment in rural areas, a large number of medium and small towns have developed all over the country. Hence, changes are never ending process.