# BLOCK 2
# PERSPECTIVES IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY

# UNIT 4  ECOLOGICAL SPATIAL[1]

**Structure**

## 4.0    OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

*   Explain the concept of space in urban sociology;

*   Discuss the concept of ecology and urban space;

*   Explain the emergence of cities in different transitional zones;

*   Describe the emergence & growth of Chicago School and urban sociology.

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

You were introduced the idea of urban sociology and its nature and scope. Your will also learnt about urbanization and urbans. Very recently, many scholars took upon themselves to explore in the realm of 'urban sociology'. One of the major ethnographic works to understand this was carried out in Chicago in the late 1920s and 1930s. The strict boundaries between sociology and anthropology stands blurred here. The growth of Chicago presented a rather interesting case to study for all. Industries and commerce was growing rapidly due to which people from different places flocked in here. While some grew their businesses by leaps and bounds, some also witnessed poverty and losses like never before. While new peoples were tasting success beyond imagination, there existed stories of loss also. Thus, Chicago occupied a very volatile space in the fabric of movement & settlement. Though by the end of 19th century, the attraction to the city might have lessened, it still occupied a prominent place for development, cultural overlaps & growth.

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New institutions paved way for newer trends. University of Chicago had set up its Sociology Department in 1892. The recruits came in from more established fields of study. Two streams of learning thus began. While one concentrated more on theorising and social philosophy, the other was more concerned with social movement. Both knowledge domains aimed to help in improving human conditions and life. One of the major influence here was that of William Isaac Thomas.

Towards the end of his time here, he introduced the idea of 'social disorganisation'. This meant the weakening of influence of rules that would have acted upon the individuals in a group. With time, Chicago Urban Studies gave much emphasis to this idea. Apart from such concepts, a major role played by him was in getting Robert Park to the field of urban sociology. One of his most prominent works has been 'The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment' published in 1915. The talent that he had allowed him to envision urbanism both at a grand level as well as in minute detail. He laid out various diverse characteristics of an urban neighbourhood. While some existed as small worlds within themselves, some existed as a mix of immigrants living together with little contact of other groups, some were individuals constantly on a move also. Such different and varied neighbourhoods fell under urban sociology and had to be described. The ecological perspective within this provided an interesting way to look into the social fabric of society.

## 4.2 CONCEPT OF ECOLOGY IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY

The growth of urban life is quite interesting. The American image in the era of 1950s had let to affluence & a certain kind of lack of any visible difference. There was mediocrity in terms of homogenisation. The aspects of race, poverty, ethnicity resurfaced in the 60s and were put under the umbrella of 'urban problems'. Migration caused by international labour and refugees of political upheavals led to significant changes in character of the city in Europe around the same time. A search and exploration for new understandings began. Until now, explorers were looking far beyond but these changes were now being witnessed just around them.

One of the major changes that urbanism saw was division of labour and its intensification. While the earlier forms of social organisation was built upon kinship bonds, personal relationships etc., now a more rational and specialised human being was emerging. This also led to a need to focus on institutions like family, courts, kinship, political apparatuses and others and their existence in the changing scenario. Also, new occupations like that of a detective, newspaperman and so on were surfacing. All these questions needed deliberation.

The moral order according to Park was a crucial factor in any society. However, this moral order in the urban scenario was not being marked by civility but by money & exterior signs like fashion etc. Thus the individual became human only in recognition by others. In his words, "Under these

circumstances the individual's status is determined to a considerable degree by conventional signs-by fashion and 'front'- and the art of life is largely reduced to skating on thin surfaces and a scrupulous study of style and manners" (Park 1952:47). This superficiality of social relations became the hallmark of urban society. However, this is not to completely disregard the existence of close and personal relations also. It would be quite probable for people in a city to keep different types of company, the characteristics of all hugely diverse from one another.

## 4.2.1 Growth of Urbanism

Urbanism is not to be understood as a one day affair. It can be seen through various studies that highlight diverse aspects of change and urban life. We shall discuss some of such prominent works here. The concept of 'Hobo' from Nels Anderson's 'The Hobo' (1923) explains Chicago's social worlds quite aptly. Hobo could be considered as the migrant worker doing odd jobs with lack of something permanent. With the coming up of new towns and cities, the social mobility increased. Chicago still remained the Hobo's capital with railroads, trains, & important means of living. Anderson himself had been a hobo as he dropped out of school & had been living such a life. This literally was participant observation where he lived and studied the streets, villages, alleys, and so on.

The people could be categorised into five types, hobo being one of them. The first was the seasonal worker whose life mainly revolved around the realm of agriculture. Second was the hobo or migrant worker. The third was just a migrant. He did not work and lived off by begging. The fourth was a home guard who was an important worker but cannot be considered as a migrant. The last was considered to be a bum who was neither working nor migrating.

There existed a host of reasons for the homeless men to becoming homeless as everyone had their own personal reasons. While some were forced out of work, others needed new jobs. Some had family crises while some were dealing with problems like alcoholism etc. Only a single reason could not be given for all homeless migrant beings. The women were not present at every moment. Many were not married. Religion conversion was done by hobos in order to avail bed facility. Most had a lot of time in hand but less money and thus could stick to window shopping and walking to different landmark points of the cities. Mission organisations and charities were not a part of their daily life and kept at a distance. Social organisation for them was thus quite weak. According to Park, Hobo was the bohemian "in the ranks of common labor".

The existence of 'gangs' was an interesting concept here. Thrasher's work has been very insightful in this context. Delinquency in urban life came across and was studied in his significant work 'The Gang' published in 1927. The age group of group members was varied though most were belonging to the adolescence stage. Territorial aspect was quite important in context of characterising the gang. The gangs passed through the transitional zones of Burgess' scheme of settlements. The social characteristics marked the gangs there. However, with time, the formation of these gangs declined as they

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moved from one zone to another zone towards more settlement. These gangs formed an integral part of social disorganisation that signified the transitional zone. Ethnic groups also led to the formation of such gangs sometimes. This is important to note that ethnicity was not the only factor for gang formation. Different economic levels of groups was a major reason for such strict boundaries. Gangs were often based on neighbourhood basis and emergence of ethnic gangs seemed natural in the circumstances. If there seemed any danger to the gang unity, the ethnic differences would heighten and lead to gang conflict. The gangs became more mixed in mixed neighbourhoods.

It is interesting that Thrasher found these gangs even in groups of children in formal and informal play groups. It thus seemed more appropriate to understand different aspects of the social organisation through this social field of gangs. The groups over time had set up their own traditions and rules thereby converting into a gang. Increasingly this gang faced opposition from surroundings, it would turn into a conflict group. Gangs didn't always exist in conflict. In fact, their major motivation lied in roaming around and creating an imaginary world that helped them to move out of their existing conditions, if only, momentarily also. Status inequality and independence posed major problems in terms of gangs formation, existence and functioning. The Gang was a platform to help human beings to be true raw self. Various personality types can thus be seen to be emerging in this changing scenario and these became the hallmark of urban life.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Pick the correct option for each statement

   i) Who wrote "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment"?

   a) Max Weber

   b) Robert Park

   c) Castells

ii) Hobo is generally considered to be?

   a) Migrant worker

   b) Politician

   c) Social activist

iii) Delinquency in urban set-up has been studied carefully by Thrasher in his significance work that is?

   a) Division of Labour

   b) The Gang

   c) The Hobo

2) Elaborate and explain the existence of Hobo in the urban life in context with space.

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## 4.3    THE SPATIAL SET-UP OF THE CITY

One of the major characteristic of urban neighbourhood was that all are very diverse from one another and they are also quite dynamic in nature thereby changing often. Competition became a way of existence. People acted like other people who constituted a sub-stratum. Darwinism took over the ideas of consensus and communication. The most powerful inhabitants would thus acquire the best of locations and the others would adjust accordingly. Dominance along with symbiotic relationship between people was important in locating and relocating them.

### 4.3.1  Burgess' City

In fact, this is the root for Burgess' idea of an ideal type of a city (Fig. 1). The first circle was the central business district. The next circle could be understood as a route to transformation. There was continuous effects of business and economy from the centre to here. Yet, there still existed contrary things like the arts, immigrants etc. 'Natural areas' that referred to neighbourhoods growing naturally, were thus created by the economic forces according to Chicago sociologists. The criticism faced by this was the generalisation from placing Chicago like this to placing other cities in a similar manner.
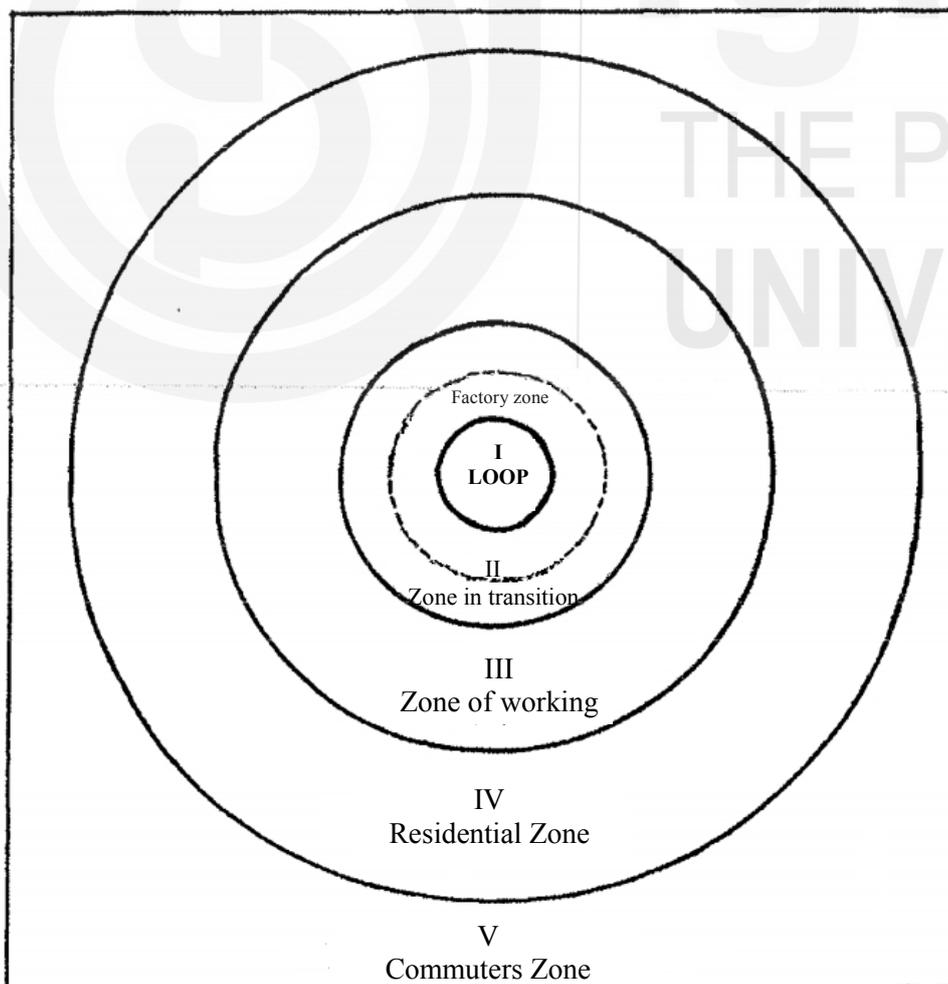
It was thought that this idea presupposes complexed division of labour. This high level of differentiation with separation of residential and work spaces didn't seem appropriate from perspective of travel and others. The fact that land was always on the market and had not other value also was critiqued. Given all the drawbacks, this theory definitely helped the Chicago sociologists. There was a certain kind of anchoring provided to them through which transitional zones could also be studied. However, the ecological concepts of space was always influenced by cultural factors and human consciousness. Though, for some areas, the space was more central to understand social features like a city.

## 4.4 SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN URBAN STUDIES

A mix of reactions came about with the stress on urban sociology. It is important to not separate anthropology from sociology. In fact urban sociology is most likely to be similar to what we may call urban anthropology. While there are accomplishments, there also exist several unresolved issues and an unsure future. Though it stands with the potential of becoming the pillar of strength for modern social anthropology. However, some criticise it for dealing with content and subject matter that should really not fall under its gamut. Some thinkers discuss about the inefficiency of theoretical perspectives and methodological learnings provided by anthropology. It shall be justifiable to say that two streams of urban studies came up here; one resembling the modern day urban sociology and the other is closer to anthropology. The ecological approach to the study of urban was inspired by biological and social ecology. It has been beneficial towards understanding urban sociology.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) Who gave the Concentric Zone theory and what is the core of the city structure?

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2) How is urban sociology and anthropology linked in terms of urban studies?

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## 4.5   LET US SUM UP

In this unit on Ecological spatial you learnt about the concept of ecology in urban sociology.

If one sees each study in urban sociology in itself, it becomes evident that Chicago school produced rich work describing, elaborating and explaining different ecologies of gangs, deviant occupations, public entertainment groups, neighbourhoods and so on. This perspective stands important and crucial in the domain of Urban Sociology.

## 4.6   REFERENCES

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Ralph H. Turner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Thrasher, Frederic M. 1963.*The Gang*. Chicago: Unh'ersity of Chicago Press.

## 4.7   SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1)  a) B

    b) A

    c) B

2)  The concept of 'Hobo' from Net Anderson's book" "The Hobo" (1923) describes Chicago's social world where Hobos can be described

**Check Your Progress 2**

1)  E.W Burgess gave the concentric zone theory based on his study of the city of Chicago of United States of America. The core of the city is called the Central Business District or CBD.

2)  Urban Sociology and Urban Anthropology share a similar Subject matter which is the study of cities and the issues related with them. However, the sociological theoretical background of sociology as well as, the methodologies differ from each other.

# UNIT 5   POLITICAL ECONOMY[1]

**Structure**

## 5.0   OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the two terms politics and economics and the relationship between the two;

- Discuss the history of political economy;

- Outline the general conceptions of political economy;

- Explain the elements of political economy; and

- Describe the nature of urban political economy.

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[1] Written by Dr. Aijaz Ahmad Gillani, Kashmir University; Kashmir

# 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Political economy in general means distribution of power. It highlights the role of capital in policy-making as well as politics. In urban areas, its main focus is on the relationship between the local governments and the capital, where in capital includes financial estate as well as real estate. The relationship between local government and capital is not established in a certain local space; instead its establishment is based on the functioning of cities, states and nations as well as the national and international capital. In this unit, we will discuss the basic concept of political economy and also political economy in urban spaces. Through a detailed historical account of political economy, the unit provides an overview of how political economy has been understood starting from Adam Smith's 17th century understanding to Karl Marx's 19th Century. The unit also offers a conceptual framework of political economy through identifying the foundational principles of it to understand how political economy can be used for the analysis of economic system. It discusses four important elements of political economy such as production, distribution, exchange and consumption and then shifts its focus to understanding political economy in the urban spaces through using two important approaches – Neo-Marxian approach and Neo-Weberian approach.

# 5.2 UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS POLITICS AND ECONOMY

Now before we start discussing the broader concept of political economy, let us try to understand the key terms associated with it such as politics and economy. Two conceptions of politics exist in literature and these two conceptions contradict each other which makes politics difficult to define. The two conceptions are the broad and narrow conceptions. The narrow conceptualization of the term implies that only politicians engage in politics. The supporters of this conceptualization of the term argue that only politicians and the machinery of government are closely associated with politics. In this sense, politics is considered as action performed by the state. However there are many other people who fall outside of the boundaries of politics as they do not take part in decision-making. This constitutes the broader conception of the term politics according to which politics occurs both within the institutional boundaries of the State as well as outside of it. Those who support this claim believe that politics cannot be confined to the government only but it exists even outside of it. Given these two conceptions of the term, there has been a disagreement among political theorists as to which conceptualization fits well in the definition of the term politics.

There has been diverse understanding of the term politics depending upon the context in which the term is used. In fact, its definition keeps changing from time to time. So there are a wide range of meanings attached to the term. And therefore, it becomes difficult to mark a divide between what can be considered as political and what cannot. But as such, politics cannot be considered as merely an act of governance but it is generally understood as an instrument of achieving the goals of the society.

On the other hand, economy can be understood as a system of institutions that plays a vital role in the production of commodities and their distribution in a given society. It is through economy that one determines the ways in which resources are distributed in a society. Economy also helps in determining the value of the goods and services and helps to identify and sort out the goods which can be traded and exchanged against other important goods not produced within the nation state. The way in which society organizes its economic system is basically a political issue. Political and legal institutions govern the way in which economy can be strengthened and resources distributed.

There are basically two categories of any economic system. One is the market system in which people own and control the means of production rather than state. In this system, what governs economy is the supply and demand of production in the sense that low supply during high demand increases the price and high supply during low demands reduces the prices. The other is the command system in which there is the centralization of economic system. This means that the decision making in economic system lies with the state. In command system, the state has a complete control over the means of production. Now since the two terms of politics and economy have been explained, in the next section, you will understand the history of political economy.

## 5.3 HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Political economy has since the past been understood differently by different social scientists. For example, Adam Smith has defined political economy as "the science of managing national resources in order to generate wealth" (Smith, 1776[1981]). Similarly for Marx, political economy means how the owners of the means of production controlled the historical processes (Marx, 1859 [1993]). During the 20th century, political economy was understood as an area of study comprising of the inter-relationship between economics and politics; it was also understood as a methodological approach which was divided into economic approach and sociological approach. Economic approach emphasized upon the individual rationality while as in sociological approach, the level of analysis was the institution.

Basically political economy entails the study of the linkages between politics and economy in terms of how politics influences economy. Political economy emerged as an independent discipline during the 17th century at a time when there was a transformation of society from feudalism to capitalism. There were many economic theorists associated with it such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who are known as the founders of political economy. They believed that political economy is the distribution of goods and economy in a nation state. Such an understanding of political economy was later changed due to the realization that primary source of economy was the production and that it is the production of goods and other commodities that can help in the development of society.

This classical understanding of political economy was not accepted by Marxists. They instead defined it in terms of the relation of production and the laws of their development. Both Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were witness to the horrific poverty among the workers and the conditions in which they lived. The prevalent conflict among two classes under capitalism and the production of goods for minority group of capitalists turned them towards dialectical and historical materialism. Through these concepts, they made attempts to explain the inequalities among two groups in the society.

Karl Marx (1859[1993]) argued that capitalist society is not permanent. The class system and the struggle between classes in capitalist society will force it to transform into a new type of society which will be free from struggle between the classes. And there will be no exploitation and domination of one class by the other. Gradually, political economy emerged as a separate branch of political science and economics and the question that how politics influences economy has been re-visited because the economic outcomes of a nation are determined by the political factors. In other words, the field of economics considered political forces not only as the influential factors of economic outcomes but as the determining factors also.

## 5.4    THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Generally, political economy is a particular way to understand the social and political phenomena; and in this phenomenon, economics and politics are not seen as separate areas. The foundation of political economy involves: (a) the relationship between economics and politics and (b) the belief that this relationship can be understood in numerous ways. So while it is important to point out that the concept of political economy indicates the relationship between them, but there is no single meaning that can be attached to political economy.

Political economy gives us a framework for analysing economy which is broader than conventional economics, in which market lies at the heart of it. Market nearly solves all the problems that the economists notice. These problems are actually the economic processes for example, the method of *production* and also the extent to which goods can be produced; then there are problems of *exchange* of goods against money which means the market value of the goods produced; there is also the problem of *distribution* through which claims can be made on the national economy and also the *rate and pattern of growth* of national income respectively.

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**Activity 1**

Interview at least five people in your neighbourhood belonging to different walks of life i.e. classes, occupation etc. Ask them what they think about politics and economics in India- Whether it is separate or linked.

Note down two major points mentioned by each person and write an essay of one page on "Political Economy and its Significance in India". Share your essay with others at yours Study Centre.

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Political economy is also concerned with these four problems but it uses a different approach which is different in three distinct ways. Firstly, individuals who constitute social classes in a society act in economic system in many ways. They can be the owners of capital; they can be workers, landlords, serfs and so on. Among these classes, there is the distribution of power which influences state policies. And it is this aspect of social classes in the economic system which is important to political economists. Secondly, as we have been discussing, markets constitute an important aspect of economic institutions. There are certain historical, political and social forces which political economists believe are fundamental to the markets. These forces help in determining the nature or markets as well as how markets function. Thirdly, state is an essential component of economy which acts as an intermediary in the distribution of interests among social classes. There is however conflict of interests among various classes and this conflict is also resolved by the state in many ways.

The main focus of political economy can thus be seen on the interaction between the state and the market. For the sake of clarity, state refers to political institutions of the modern nation-state while as market refers to the economic institutions governed and controlled by self-interests of people and conditioned through balancing the demand and supply.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Define the terms politics and economy?

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2) Name two categories of economic system?

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3) What do you understand by political economy?

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4) Political economy as a methodological approach is divided into two approaches. Name them.

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5) Political economy involves the relationship between …...................... and .............................................

## 5.5    ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

There are four important elements of political economy. The first is production involving two aspects of labour and capital. The second is distribution involving rent, wages and profit. Third is the exchange which involves the exchange of commodities for benefits and fourth is the consumption which involves both productive and unproductive consumption.

### 5.5.1    Production

The process of production involves human labour and capital.

#### 5.5.1.1 Labour

In any society, human labour is used jointly with the capital. Labour is considered as a distinction portion of the entire process of production and important for labourer's subsistence also. Any kind of activity by the labourer involves two things – the consumption and the operation. Labourer cannot be detached from his labour. But there has to be improvements in terms of the labourer's productive powers. These improvements can be seen in the form of parts of capital and they arise from the division or distribution of labour. This aspect of labour distribution has been pointed out clearly by Adam Smith (1776[1981]) in his book "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" in which he argued that the effects of the division of labour can be verified through an increase in the productive powers. In simple terms, if a labourer engages in one aspect of the productive process and another in the second aspect, they are likely to acquire greater produce than in the opposite case.

#### 2.5.1.2 Capital

Capital is ultimately derived from labour, but the process of production starts with hands. Thus the first part of capital was the end result of pure labour. Capital, in general, means anything which is produced by the labourer employed. Thus, capital is apparently the result of the labourer's labour which finally becomes the saving. If there is no saving, there can be no capital; and if all the production is immediately consumed, there will remain no part of capital and there will be no further production. This means that there has to be something which must be produced and not consumed

immediately. The part which is not immediately consumed becomes the saving and this saving is used for further production.

Thus both the labour and the capital are jointly result in the production of something and the entire production may either be owned by one party or a part of it may be owned by another party. This means that when the capitalist owns the produce and the producer (that is, the labour of the labourers), the capitalist becomes the owner of both of these. A common example of this sort is of an individual who cultivates his land by using his own labour instead of hiring the labourers ultimately becomes the owner of both the capital and the labour. But if the same individual cultivates the land by employing labourers, then he becomes the owner of the capital only.

This mode of production process gives rise to the two classes that is capitalists involving those who supply the resources to the labourers and the other class is of working men who sell their labour in the process of production.

### 5.5.2 Distribution

So far we have understood the first element of political economy, that is, production in which two classes of people are involved – the capitalists and the labourers. Both these classes receive the share of what is produced, either in the form of the produce or any other benefit derived from it. The entire process of distribution involves the rent, the wages and the profit.

**5.5.2.1 Rent**

Land as such is divided into fertile and infertile land. Fertile land is the one which can yield more produce while as infertile is the barren land, which is sandy and rocky. The former can yield double the produce in a year while as the latter can at times yield nothing. So there are different kinds of land depending upon fertility. The fertile land yields rent while as the infertile land yields no rent. But the infertile land will yield rent once it has been made fertile. Or even if there is something least derived from the barren land, it can yield a little proportion of rent also.

**5.5.2.2 Wages**

Wages is the second sub-element in the distribution process. So what proportion of produce is distributed between the labourers and the capitalists? In fact, labourers share is determined through the wages that they get for the production process and the amount of wages being paid to the labourers determines their share of the production. Apparently, the proportion of produce between the capitalists and the labourers is also determined through the bargain system between them. All bargaining is done freely except that it is determined through competition; however, the terms of bargaining are sometimes modified depending upon the degree of demand and supply. However, if the manpower is increased, there is a decrease in the wages but there is simultaneously an increase in the capital also.

Generally however, if capital naturally increases faster than the total population, it would result in the prosperous condition of the population. But

if population increases more than that of the capital, the condition of the people cannot be preserved and also the wages will see a fall. This fall in the wages will be the causal factor of poverty among the population. This poverty will gradually and consequently result in an increase in the mortality rate. One thing that needs to be understood here is the fact that capital has a less tendency than population to increase and therefore the situation of people is likely to be miserable.

### 5.5.2.3 Profit

Profit is whatever proportion of produce remains after the rent and wages are distributed. The profits gained out of the total produce is determined by what the owners receive out of the joint production of labour and the resources. So the amount of profit depends upon the share given out in the form of wages. And it is generally said that an increase in the wages will result in a decrease in the profit and an increase in the profit will result in a decrease in the wages. In this sense then, profits depend upon wages in terms of profit seeing a fall when wages rise and rise when wages fall. However there is likely that both the wages and the profit may see a fall or rise at the same time also.

So as we have understood now, whatever is produced through the use of labour and investment in terms of capital, is divided into three parts. Firstly the rent which is given for the land; secondly the wages which are paid to the labourers for their labour; and third is the profit which the capitalists get after the distribution of produce.

## 5.5.3  Exchange

The system of exchange depends upon the needs and demands of the people. If two groups of people have produced more of the commodities than what is required by them for their consumption, they would exchange the portion of it for the commodities which they do not produce. For instance, say one person produced rice and the other produces wheat. In order for the accommodation of both, they can exchange their produce, say rice for wheat. So the process of exchange involves two parties – those who supply commonly called as carriers and those who receive which are called as merchants. So there are two ways through which commodities can be carried, that is, land and water. Carriage by land involves the use of carts, or other means of transportation by land while as carriage by water involves ships and other people who navigate these ships. The manpower used in these carriage systems are also paid maintenance cost incurred during the process of carriage.

However what determines the quantity of goods to be exchanged? Generally, the quantity for exchange is determined through the demand and supply. For example, if there is more demand for rice than wheat, then the same proportion of wheat will be exchanged against rice. However if the demand for rice increases over a period of time, it will not increase the quantity of wheat in the exchange process. This is the law of exchange and one of the important aspects of investigation in political economy.

### 5.5.4   Consumption

Among all the four elements of political economy, the first three which we have so far discussed (that is production, distribution and exchange) are a means to the fourth element which is an end and that is consumption. In order to under consumption, it can be categorised into two forms – the productive consumption and the unproductive consumption. Productive consumption refers to the consumption of resources in the production process and there are three such resources used in the productive consumption. The first is the wages of the labourer which enables him to consume the goods that the labourer produces. The second resource used for productive consumption is the machinery which includes the means of carriage also. The third resource used in the process is the raw materials which are used in the production process. On the other hand, the unproductive consumption involves all the consumption which does not produce revenue or through which income cannot be generated. For example all the goods produced by using unproductive means of consumption can result in an end to the production process that is unproductive consumption. And in the productive consumption, the resources are not lost but whatever involves unproductive consumption is lost because people consume it. Also all the resources of the productive consumption becomes the capital unlike those things which are included in the unproductive consumption.

## 5.6   URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

As we now know that political economy lays much emphasis upon the role of capital in politics as well as policy making. However, urban political economy exclusively focuses on the relationship between the local politics such as urban governments and capital such as finance and real estate. This relationship exists at both the local level as well as at the global level. This relationship does not exist in itself at the local level; in fact this relationship is impacted by how cities, states, and nations behave and also by the actions of capital both national and international.

Urban political economy is actually a concept that engages with two important questions in urban sociology. One is related to the question of factors that cause urbanization and other is related to the city in terms of who governs it? An economic explanation to these two questions which are apparently distinct and flexible in terms of being a critical framework can be mentioned. Through this economic explanation, a variety of urban occurrences can be investigated which confirms the status of urban political economy as being dominant in urban sociology. Urban political economy asserts that the economy and the political structures within a city involve a vigorous and an opposing mechanism for the appropriation of the wealth.

**Activity 2**

Talk to two people; one working in the organized sector of the economy and one in the unorganised sector of the economy and ask them about how did Corona Virus; Covid 19 affect them during the complete lockdown in Indian

cities where they work. Write a note of a page on this impact and analyse the differences. Share it with others at your Study Centers.

Urban political economy is an analysis of the urban ecology; it offers an explanation of the growth of cities and other urban regions besides analysing their structures. With its emphasis on the idea of space and the competition therein for resources among individuals or groups, the hierarchies in the political, the economic actors, the rules are seen as the expressions of vital driving forces. The result is that the institutions such as urban governments, business elites, urban policy makers and other institutions are not considered as the real urban structures. There has been a conflict among these structures due to their denial of the power.

As a result of this, urban political economists started emphasizing upon and explaining urban relations through investigating the role of social power and economic structures.

Two important approaches can be mentioned here to understand the urban political-economic relations.

## 5.6.1 The Neo-Marxian Approach

Urban political economy revises Marxian theoretical legacy in the urban settings. This is one of the areas that Karl Marx did not focus extensively in his writings. Neo-Marxists made it clear that the evolution of city can be traced from its historical relations of production. In order to progress and advance in terms of their class interests by avoiding rigid infrastructures in the urban areas, industrial capitalists supported the bordering of urban areas and the creation of sub-urban settlements. They also advanced their political as well as cultural interests through policies in order to promote ownership of homes and the development of sub-urban areas. The Neo-Marxists' claims that appeared during 1970s and 1980s along with other intellectual ideas do not only convey social relations in urban areas but they also act as the driving forces of these social relations.

## 5.6.2 Neo-Weberian Approach

While Neo-Marxists concerned themselves with the structural aspects of capitalists which became the focus area for urban political economy, Weber's offered a conceptual clarity of urban political economy which serves as a basis for understanding social power. So Marx in fact paid little attention towards politics' autonomy from the material relations of production. Consequently, structural Marxists failed to understand urban political power; instead their only focus was on structures and the historical imaginations about economy. So the question which was raised during 1950s and 1960s within the field of political science that 'who governs the city' was reintroduced. Earlier in debates around the issue of governance of city, Floyd Hunter (1953) as well as those who advocated the elitist perspective argued that private urban elites continuously promoted their interests and succeeded. However Robert Dahl (1961) disagreed with the claims made by Floyd Hunter and others by claiming that private interest groups cannot succeed

consistently; they cannot dominate the politics in the urban regions consistently. Such a debate remained inconclusive until 1970s when urban political economists explored how cities produce wealth for capitalists.

As a result, urban political economists adopted the Neo-Weberian approach to identify the social production of urban space so as to control the interests and also encourage urban elites in their political dominance. This suggests that the governance in urban areas is not the handiwork of urban governments only but the governance of urban spaces also includes decision-making by private elites. 'Urban Machine Growth' theory which was propounded by Harvey Molotch (1976) did not deal with the ways in which urban elites play a role in the politics or the conditions for collaboration among them and also if they succeeded in their attempt for the growth of urban spaces and in achieving political supremacy. After 1980s, urban political economy was very much influenced by the urban regime theory (Stone, 1989). Urban regimes comprise many varieties and each urban regime has its own agenda which its members pursue. Some urban regimes are very progressive while as others uphold their existing political situations (Stone, 1989). However, the one among all the political regimes is the development regime which is promoted by the pro-growth political elites. And those involved in the development regime share certain political and business interests that subsequently instigate cooperation and safeguard them from the disputes in their coalition which is between the public and the private.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) What do you understand by Urban Political economy?

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2) There are four important elements of political economy. Name them.

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3) The process of production involves ............................ and ……................

4) How can the quantity of goods be determined for exchange process?

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   ...................................................................................................................

5) Production, distribution, exchange and consumption are all a means to an end. True or False

## 5.7    LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the general notions of politics and economics wherein we also discussed how these terms have been understood differently. We also comprehended the two economic systems that is market system and command system. We also discussed how the political economy has been understood since the past starting with Adam Smith and thus we have traced the history of political economy. Then we discussed the usage of the term through discussing its two foundational principles. We also discussed the elements of political economy such as production, distribution, exchange and consumption and illustrated them exclusively including their sub-elements. The later part of the unit marks a shift from the general notions of political economy to the idea of urban political economy in which we have discussed two important approaches for the understanding of urban political economy such as the Neo-Marxian approach and Neo-Weberian approach. The unit is vividly drafted for the enrichment of knowledge of the students about the concept of political economy in general and urban political economy in particular.

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## 5.9 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Politics refers to an instrument of governance used for achieving the goals of the society while as economics refers to a system of institutions which play a vital role for the production and distribution of commodities in a society.

2) Market System and Command System

3) Political economy refers to the interplay between the state and the economics and it is a particular way to understand the social and political phenomena.

4) Economic Approach and Sociological Approach

5) Politics or state and economy.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1) Urban political economy refers to the role of capital in politics and it focuses on the relationship between local politics and capital.

2) Production, Distribution, Exchange and Consumption.

3) Labour and Capital

4) Though demand and supply

5) False

# UNIT 6 PERSPECTIVES IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY- NETWORK[*]

**Structure**

## 6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

* Explain the concept of network in urban sociology;

* Examine the emergence of Information Technology & communication (ICT); and

* Discuss the 'global city' and its networks.

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit on "Political Economy" you learnt how the state politics and economic institutions and processes affect society. In this, unit on Network we have explained about these and other linkages in the context of ICT's.

The idea of a society enmeshed in networks or to say, a 'network society' is closely associated with the social implications of globalisation phenomenon as well as the electronic and modern technologies that form the newer ways of communicating in society. Manuel Castells in his significant work defined network society and theorised about it. According to him, a network society is "a society whose social structure is made up of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communications technologies" (Castells 3:2004).

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It is interesting to note that these new social structures did not come out of vacuum but have been a result of certain existing processes of the last 20th century. These new social structures emerged due to:

i) The restructuring of industrial economies as they paved way for accommodation of new market approaches. This mainly led to the opening of market development paradigms along with the gradual weakening of nation-state idea. Stress on deepening of social inclusion and exclusion within and beyond the countries could thus be witnessed.

ii) Movements oriented towards freedom & cultural changes of the last 1960s & early 1970s like civil rights movement or the movement towards environmental safety or feminist movements also led to building up of better networks. The movements have always been very important in history. These create conditions that stress on a 'human-capabilities paradigm' thereby focussing on human capability & their rights. The emphasis on freedom movement led to more open systems of communication & modern network structures conducive to human growth.

iii) There had been a gradual revolution in the domains of information & communication technologies that definitely created an impact for network society to grow further. According to Castells, "the culture of freedom was decisive in inducing network technologies which, in turn, were the essential infrastructure for business to operate its restructuring in terms of globalisation" (2004: 22).

## 6.2 CONCEPTS OF NETWORK IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY

It was around the 21st century that a change was being witnessed. This was a change marked by the emergence of the era of the commons. There was multi-dimensional transformations occurring in each facet of living those were difficult to comprehend. The need of the discipline of Sociology was felt more than ever. This truly had to be the study of society. It was not to bound itself as just a normative kind of instruction giving. In short, a consensus on a new kind of sociology was felt. This sociology was based on observation, theory building and communication. There was a whirlwind of social changes that society was facing, different social processes which were emerging at a great speed. The need of the sociologist was to understand and elaborate due to this change using the creativity embedded into the values and technologies of Information Age. Some concepts that stood out in terms of a network perspective of urban sociology have been discussed below.

### 6.2.1 Power & Empowerment

Social & communication networks that are marked by ample exclusion & inclusion in any social structure go through the presence and integral role of 'power' that determines social change. Power in simple words can be understood as the capacity to impose one's will onto others. Control over communication and influence over it is the major form of power in network

societies. This is also true as the connectivity and access to networks become the pillars for groups in order to impose their ethics, rules and set forth their goals in the society. These are then the mediums for exercising power. It is interesting to note that network society is beyond the spatial constraints. One of the most crucial effects of globalisation in the network society is the creation of social, political and cultural relationships that are not bound by the location of the individual. It is power that is exercised beyond these locations.

In societies of the traditional type, social relations, customs and the entire culture gets formed differently in different spaces. Individuals then act according to the established rules of that space for instance, families, villages, cities, towns etc. However, this changes in the urban network space. The regional spaces lack their control here. People are now free to communicate and build relationships through the global net, mass media, computers and so on. They might not share any common history or face-to face interaction might be lacking, yet a relationship is built. Also the earlier existing traditions and social relationships are affected with the growing network society and the values associated with it. According to Castells, empowerment becomes stronger due to the role of social media and networking including things like Facebook as there always exist several social movements connected through the internet. The active social media then becomes a channel of globalisation to lead to higher cultural diversity, creativity and newer arenas of freedom. Thus, one of the most essential roles is that of Information Technology exercised across any existing borders.

## 6.2.2 Meaning of Information Technology

Castells pointed out that social networks have always existed in any society or civilisation. However, the vast usage and existence of Information Technologies (ICTs) distinguishes the network society from earlier existing social networks. The ICTs are ways of establishing networks across vast regions and thus, different kinds of social relationships are created.

The change in pre-existing social structures is also dependant on how we interpret, understand and put into effect the new ways of communication.

• If, at all, communication comes across as a 'one way' passage where knowledge and information is being passed on to the recipients who absorb this unquestioningly and passively; no curiosity is raised; then the communities lead to becoming 'disempowered' communities based on only external knowledge. This leads to a passive growth without rationality.

• If communication is understood and taken as a process where information is being processed continuously; recipients are understanding this and questioning this and thus shaping up their worldview; then the local communities become a group of 'empowered' people. There are new ideas in accordance with existing cultures. Innovative forms of communication and sharing of knowledge becomes empowering.

The usage of ICTs lead to the difference between communities becoming empowered or passive recipients for development. In fact, it has been critiqued by those who discuss the flip side of globalisation. According to these critics such inflow of knowledge or information leads to a uniform and standardised community formation due to the technological capabilities. The one at the centre of the power decides what constitutes as information and knowledge and thus the cultures get organised accordingly. However, there also exist the proponents according to whom this exchange of electronic communication is a two-way process. as the information that is being passed on is not taken in uncritically. There is always a room open for interpretations, differences, innovative applications and newer ideas. Thus the dominant knowledge is not considered as an end in itself. This is in fact the central tension occurring in most network societies wherein some groups try to impose their ideas and thoughts on the others while others continuously try and resist this kind of a domination. There is an interesting tussle about the effects of the increasing information technology and its usage in societies.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Network Society is directly linked to:
   a) Social Control
   b) Information Technology
   c) Informal Groups

2) Sociology of Urban Network has been worked upon hugely by:
   a) Simmel
   b) R. Park
   c) Castells

3) The spread of information through ICTs may lead to:
   a) power to groups
   b) breakdown in groups
   c) both power & empowerment

## 6.3 THE NETWORK SOCIETY

With several changes occurring simultaneously, it was realised that a new economy was being built up in this new emerging society. Along with this new economy, there were many more changes in other aspects of society also. The renewal and newer facets of sociology were thus required in order to keep it relevant and useful. A new technological paradigm was being built. This emerged from the new information technologies including genetic engineering. Claude Fischer (1992) regarded technology as a part of material culture. This was a socially embedded process and not simply some external factor that affected society. This material transformation of the society is quite important and crucial for the entire social structures and processes remain dependant on this. Thus, social interaction is affected along with the electronically based information networks.

Much earlier, there occurred the industrial revolution that could not be separated form industrial society and changes within; similarly, there is this new information technology revolution that has become a powerful & effective tool for multi-dimensional social change within the social fabric of society. Information technology may directly not be a causal factor of social change; but it definitely is a mean of leading to processes that create new forms of production and management, newer forms of communication and globalisation in economy and culture. The emerging new society can be seen to be comprising of networks.

Electronic networks become the pillar for all global financial markets processing financial transactions. The internet becomes the buzzword hailing from computer networks. The entire process of electronic hypertext, global connections, communication networks in studios, newsrooms, information systems, mobile transitions units begins to mark the existence of society. Thus the global economy is not a restricted one. It is an amalgamation of various financial transactions in different market sites with a varied labour pool. There is continue information exchange that marks the business organisation. Thus these organisations become network enterprises. The functioning of these enterprises is then dependant on the institutional decision-making that is automatically attached to the information networks and communication. The internet links the most active and dynamic movements not only across the city but beyond national boundaries too.

## 6.3.1 Globalisation and Network

Globalisation becomes the second dimension of social change along with Information Technology. This comprises of technological, organisational and institutional. This trend is historically new as the earlier existing internationalisation could not really enjoy the benefits of information and communication technologies as also seen by David Held et alter (1999). The electronic hypertext that is also the common frame of reference for symbolic processing from all sources and all messages becomes the third dimension enclosed in the cultural manifestation. The internet is the medium then that links people with one another as well as the shared multimedia hypertext and has grown by leaps and bounds with globalisation. This hypertext is integral to the formation of new culture as this is a culture based on virtual reality. The virtuality becomes the backbone of a symbolic environment and part of the experience being created and shared by communicating individuals.

The last major characteristic of this new global networks is the decline of the idea of sovereign nation-state. This is not to question the institutional existence of nation-state but with the transformation of power apparatuses, change is bound to happen. Rearrangements take place in national governments, international networks, organisations and so on. The entire political representation thus gets re-presented and re-fined.

In addition to the above, there is a serious crises of existing patriarchy with women's insurgency and the surfacing up of gay and lesbian movements that challenge the anti-attitude and practices towards heterosexuality. This is a way ahead for setting up of different kinds of families with more egalitarian

values of life. The crises is about the pace, speed and human cost that patriarchy shall lead to choos. With multiple sexualities, socialisation and personal networking; this may change. These are the lifestyle changes that accompany other domains of social change.

The progress in the domain of science and scientific knowledge has also been noteworthy. This knowledge is being used for a healthy progression of science. This is evident from the ecological influence seen lately that has affected our ways of living. It shall be important to note what Castells said that "We are just at the beginning of a most extraordinary cultural trans-formation that is reversing the course of thought that has prevailed among the world's dominant groups since the Enlightenment" (2000: 694). Thus we see the emergence and flourishing of a new society that came as a consequence of the interaction of three essential components that took place around the same time. This included the major revolutions in the field of information technology, the restructuring of capitalism and the emergence of social movements in the 1960s within the US and Western Europe as well. Amidst the diversity, there is a new social structure based on networks leading to a network society.

## 6.3.2 Sociology and Urban Network

Social structures are redefined on the basis of networks being an organising principle. The social structures here comprise of human relationships with production/ consumption or any power dynamics or experience being vocal in a meaningful interaction within the fabric of culture. It is within the new social structure that is surfacing up that sociology must take the opportunity to voice out the conceptual and methodological issues.

Sociology has been involved with the study of networks. Works like that of Wellman (1999), Fischer (1992), Granovetter (1985) are some of the popular ones. The territorial constraint ceases as soon as there is diffusion of communication technologies that form interactive social practices. However this end of distance can't be considered to be the only way of assuming the end of spatial dimension of society. The meaningful physical space is a major source of experience building for many people. Also, the interactive communication being a distant one cannot eliminate the physical space entirely. It just helps in emergence of a new form/ type/ kind of space. This space is constituted of electronic networks and information flow. In addition to these, it is also made up of territories as the physical space also needs network connection for them to function.

This flow of space is made of different pieces of places that remain connected through telecommunication, facilities like transportation & information technologies. Lately, there has been much deliberation about 'the global city'. It is important to note that this global city is not just a vast metropolitan centre that acquires a high rank in the geographical scenario world-wide. Such cities existed earlier too and were called the 'world city'. Thus, the global city in fact is not a territorial city. It exists in different cities of the entire world, small, large and even larger spaces. These global cities are made up of global economies that are located in different cities and linked to one

another. The management of global communication takes place through these. For instance, some parts of Manhattan could be regarded as a global city due to its network of global management. In short, global cities become a network of non-territorial regions that are united by networks beyond any locality. This is a way of examining the inter territorial networks and their connection and relationship with the existing local surroundings. Thus a relation between the local and global is built in this manner. We may observe that it is the interaction of discontinuous networks with local spaces that form the basis of new structures.

**Check Your Progress 2**

Mark the following as True or False

1) Network is a new phenomenon emerging in the contemporary society only ……………………………

2) Information Technology has not created much impact in our daily living ……………………………

3) The networks emerging do not restrict groups and individuals territorially or so …………………………

## 6.4    LET US SUM UP

Networks have existed in social organisation since a very early time. Like every other phenomenon, networks too had many advantages as well as drawbacks. The world has been becoming more volatile than ever. Thus the qualities of flexibility and adaptability have definitely been working in favour of networks in order to manage the social order. However, when the critical size increases, then networks face a problem of management. They are a means for personal interaction leading to a reciprocal support system. Though sometimes they lack the capability of mobilising resources & performing some particular task. For instance, in conduct of war; large centralised forces performed way better than networks. However, this limitation of networks was overcome with the emergence and gradual growth of information and communication technologies in the form of Internet. With the coming of electronic system of communication, the potential of decentralising and performing the task in a better way increased. Thus flexibility came in along with good performance. In fact, gradual weakening and erosion of centralised hierarchical organisations was seen as networks grew stronger.

Social evolution in Information Age can be explained by the active networks that characterise all multi-dimensional social structures. The scale of a city along with its diversity is organised around the networks that become a reason of strength for these diversified complex cities. According to Mitchell a network is "a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behaviour of the persons involved" (1969: 2). Thus, by explaining and interpreting spatial structures in accordance to networks, a new filled of study emerges within the gamut of urban sociology.

## 6.5    REFERENCES

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## 6.6    SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress 1**

1)    b

2)    c

3)    c

**Check Your Progress 2**

1)    False

2)    False

3)    True

# UNIT 7  CULTURAL*

**Structure**

7.0   Objectives

7.1   Introduction

7.2   Theorising Urbanism

    7.2.1   Meaning of Urbanism

7.3   The Urbanism Theory and Sociological Research

    7.3.1   The Ecology

    7.3.2   The Social Organisation

    7.3.3   The personality and Collective Behaviour

7.4   Let Us Sum Up

7.5   References

7.6   Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

## 7.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the emergence of urban like in a city;

- Discuss the theories related with urban life;

- Explain the different aspects of Urbanism and Sociological Research.

## 7.1   INTRODUCTION

You learnt in the previous unit on Network about the JCI's and networks society. Here we have discussed the urban cultural dimension.

What is distinctively urban? What signifies something modern? It is the emergency and growth of some great cities that marks the beginning of an urban era. The cities have made the maximum difference of connectivity of the human soul to the organic nature. In fact, it is quite impossible to find distant groups living amongst themselves, away from other groups in the day and age of these cities. The idea of Sumner's primitive society seems to have been eroded with time. This kind of society is quite contrary to the urban spaces where humans are living in large numbers leading to emergence of new classes and communicate brining together in different cultures that are the backbone of the urban civilisation.

However, it is not only the number of people or so as to say the population that can help in characterising the urban city. It is beyond these numbers that the city exerts a control. One can witness this through economic, political and

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social influences that are exerted beyond territorial limits and that bind people from all across the vast cosmos. Thus the city is not just a living space or working arena but also the axis of control.

Modern era is generally defined by the growth of cities and rapid modernisation. While the rate of urbanisation has been different in various countries depending on the influence of industrialisation in the respective countries, yet an effect can be seen everywhere. Also, this has been happening on a much higher rate in countries where industrialisation created a strong foothold. This change from the relatively rural to urban within the same generation has been seen in several industrialised centres like Japan, US etc. the changes has been seen along with a shift of trends within the social life. This shift is interesting to the eye of the sociologist who wishes to understand the changes from rural to urban living. Also, this becomes a very crucial aspect of study to understand and delve deeper into any social problems facing the world today as this elaborates the mode of contemporary living and functioning.

The city definitely has not come up out of nowhere, it is a product of gradual change. Thus it shall be quite rare to see a complete wipe-out of earlier existing forces as they shall always exist in some form along with newer trends. Thus the pre-existing folk society always has an effect and influence over the ways of daily living. Thus, a stark divide or discontinuity between rural and urban is difficult to find. Thus the rural and urban may be regarded as two end of a bridge within which the entire population is spread. It has to be remembered that urbanisation is not only an attraction of rural to urban cities. It is more of an adaptation to an urban mode of living, to the new trends that are associated with the city and through the institutions functioning through the systems of transportation and communication in the cities.

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**Activity 1**

Discuss the issue of migration from the rural to urban areas in your family. Note down the changes in life style, consumption and leisure activities that has changed for those who lived in the villages whey they came to the city. Write a note of one page on these social and cultural changes in your family and discuss with your peers at your Study Centre.

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To differentiate the rural from urban, the density of the population should also show the characteristics that help in marking a city. To define a city in a complete sense, the definition should not only be able to characterise the city but also should give space for variation among different type of cities. For instance, a one-industry city shall be remarkably different from multi-industrial city, an industrial city would differ from a commercial city and so on. Thus, the definition can contain broadly defining features of the urban city but variations should always exist. In addition to this, some focus on the changing rural is also important. This is because the rural is in continuous touch and contact with the urban. It is also important to note that urbanism should not be understood as another form of capitalism or industrialisation.

Even though the emergence and growth of cities is not apart from the growing technology, capitalism, industry led development; but cities of a different form existed in the pre-industrial era also. Thus, sociologically speaking, city comprises of heterogenous people in a comparatively large and dense area.

The great city remains dominant for several reasons including the existence of vast administrative, financial, technological facilities. Also, cultural institutions of growth are here like educational facilities, press, theatre, concert halls, museums, libraries, radio stations, professional organisations and so on.  It is strange that even though city forms such an integral part of our daily lives, studies & deliberation over them has been limited. There have been attempts to explain the idea of a city from different perspectives including geographical, political, economic, historical etc. The sociological perspective in addition to others helps in gaining much clarity about the existence of cities. The major factors affecting this are the technological development in the fields of communication as well as transportation that make the city a significant feature of being in our daily life also making the urban way of living move beyond the city boundaries. Through a sociological perspective, one can distinctively define and highlight the features or an urban group life. The number of inhabitants is not a strong marker for an urban city. Urbanism, if understood in terms of a physical limit of an urban city, can be a bit erroneous as urbanism shall go beyond the physical geographical understanding.

## 7.2    THEORISING URBANISM

In order to understand and explain the city, we must look at and explore the way of understanding and theorizing the concept of urbanism. Though one may find several works highlighting the historical process and relative being of the city; yet some comprehensive sociological work on the city including its mode of living with empirical research is missing from literature. Few of such prominent works include Robert Park's paper 'The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment' & Weber's essay 'Die Stadt' among others.

### 7.2.1   Meaning of Urbanism

One of the problems faced while understanding urbanism and cities is the kinds of social action and organisations that exist and function amidst this group of heterogenous individuals. These are diverse and thus putting them all together is a difficult task. We can however, find a few criterion that essentially make the features of a city. A few factors stand out while theorising urbanism. Let's discuss these here.

**Size**: Increased number of inhabitants is bound to change the character of the settlement and the kind of interaction taking place. Large number of people imply a greater range of variation. Thus, the occupations, cultural lifestyles etc. shall vary more here than in the sector of rural habitation. The sentiment of sharing a common heritage, tastes, lineage is comparatively weaker here. Also, the increased number of inhabitants means that all members might not

be knowing each other personally the same number of interactionas in the small areas which one knows almost every person and to each of whom he has a positive relationship one would be completely at and would fall into an unthinkable mental condition." (Simmel 1903: 201).

**Density**: It is important to note what Durkheim had remarked about the density that with increasing number of population and static area the specialisation shall increase as that is the only way an area can support the increase in numbers. With urban habitation, the physical contacts becomes close but social contacts may remain distant. The needs of the area are felt and changes are made accordingly. For instance, the commercial and residential areas may separate as keeping them together might not yield beneficial results for work or for people.

**Heterogeneity**: The social interaction taking place here is beyond any caste or class barriers. Thus the stratification then becomes even more complexed than simple as it existed in rural settings. With fluctuating statuses, individuals are constantly interacting with varied groups thereby making insecurity a norm of such societies. This also becomes the base for higher sophistication levels amongest the city dwellers. Group membership changes are also quite rapid here owing to greater mobility. Thus, with large number of people entering the city space, there is higher depersonalisation found in larger cities.

The several institutions and facilities are thus being used by a group of different people. Thus, the institutions and organisations need to function so as to satisfy the average individual rather than all people separately. Also, the public utilities like schools, theatres, libraries should act as levelling forces to keep the social order intact.

**Check Your Progress I**

Please choose the correct option for each statement?

1) What comprises of a good definition of theorising urbanism?

   a) Size, Density & Race

   b) Size, Density & Heterogeneity

   c) Density, Race & Territoriality

2.) The emergence of a city means-

   a) Only urban existence

   b) Complete erosion of rural living

   c) Gradual change from rural to urban with influences

3.) One of the prominent thinkers to work on the idea of a 'City' was:

   a) Marx

   b) Goffman

   c) Park

## 7.3    THE URBANISM THEORY AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The sociological perspective of understanding and exploring the city should not be only restricted to the problems or lacking in the domain of sociology per se but should extend their work in a more integrated manner to comprise the whole of the city. Namely the features of the size, density and heterogeneity of the population can help in characterising the city in differentiation to other kinds of existing settlements. Thus, urbanism can be looked at from three vantage points-

- the physical base comprising of the density of population, ecological order and technology existence,

- as a social organisation that has several social institutions within it, inter-relationships between them &

- as a mix of different attitudes and ideas leading to forms of social control.

### 7.3.1    The Ecology

The physical and ecological factors make it easier to understand the city with quantification in terms of size, density & character of the population. Some of the facilities that exist in the city can grow and function only because of the needs existing in the city. Also, these make the cities dominate over the adjoining spaces. It is through the urban population that one can differentiate the city from other areas. For instance, it is evident that the number of younger population is more here than in the rural areas that inhabits more older population and children. Also, the ethnic or racial barriers seem to diminish in the city habitation. People from diverse cultures and recol traits live together here. However, what stands out is the lower birth rate & higher death rate in the cities. This is closely knit with increasing urbanisation. Cities thus become the consumers of human life rather than producers. The entire gamut of processes, institutions, organisations, land uses, mobility, professional set-ups, communication facilities, housing, rentals, transportation are thus all inter-linked and cannot be seen in vacuum from one another forming the city as a whole.

### 7.3.2    The Social Organisation

The urban life is often understood as leading to weak kinship bonds, lesser solidarity and higher individualism. This is evident from the existing lower birth rates that show the erosion of traditional family structures from the city life. Facilities of recreation, education etc. are transferred beyond the family groups. The fabric of the family changes with smaller sizes, lesser children, late or no marriages and so on. Though one can witness the breakdown of caste and racial barriers, income differentiation becomes a part of this habitation. While there exist higher incomes, there are also increased burdens like that of home rents etc. While the traditional forms of groups have lesser control, newer groups with high inter-dependence of use exist.

> **Activity 2**
>
> Make a list of characteristics or features that you associate with an 'urbanite' as you understand. Compare your list with those of other learners at your Study Centre.

### 7.3.3    The Personality and Collective Behaviour

The individual's personality and life choices emanate form the choices offered by groups pertaining to education, political, religious etc. Thus the organisational framework forms the interests, ideas and attitudes of the individual. The organisations thus may not always keep the interests of each individual in mind. This also leads to higher suicide rates, delinquent crime rate, depression corruption etc. This also means that social control is exercised through these formally organised groups in the city. Interest units are created to replace the fading territorial ties and kinship groups.

**Check Your Progress 2**

1)   What do you understand by Theorising Urbanism

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2)   Can you elaborate about the features of a great city

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## 7.4    LET US SUM UP

In this unit on "Cultural" we have explained to you the meaning of the concept of urbanism. How urbanism is the cause of the shift in the traditional social structure found in rural areas. While describing urbanism we have briefly discussed the concept of ecology and social orgnisation. This unit also highlights the emergence of an urban personality and how living in the city or town brings out a distinctly different collective behavior where the formal type of relations are found more predominantly compared with the face to face primary group interactions. Thus, this unit has defined and described the nature of "cultural" in urban sociology.

People from urban areas thus acquire segmental roles owing to their limited interaction with each other. Their dependency on larger groups and

organisations is more for daily needs than people from rural areas but their dependency on particular people as such is limited. The contact is superficial and transitory even though face to face. It is these features that also explain the rational attitude being found among the urbanites. When the number of people increases beyond a point one can interact personally need of with only a few. Then one needs to have intermediaries/ mediums/ representation and so on. Thus the voice of the representative becomes significant in the city.

Different areas in the city specialise in different fields. The city thus is a mix of various mosaics where transition from one to another could be abrupt and sudden. As individuals may not know each other properly, the spirit of competition tends to be stronger here. Also, this may lead to certain disorders and mental problems the, depressed.

There are continuous changes in urbanism also. These changes not only affect the cities but would influence the entire world. This unified and holistic knowledge of the city and urbanism can form a part of 'Urban sociology' that is crucial for understanding the contemporary world. Thus, the cultural perspective adds to the understanding of urban city in particular and urban sociology at a larger level.

## 7.5    REFERENCES

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## 7.6    SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress I**

1)  b

2)  c

3)  c

**Check Your Progress 2**

1)  Theorising urbanism means the attempts that different sociologists and social scientists have made to understand and conceptualise the nature of urban and its impact on society in terms of changes in the life-style.

2)  Features of a great city depends largely on the location; population from diverse cultures and regions and especially the non-agricultural occupations-professional classes; social organization etc.