Settlement Geography

Rural settlement and urban settlement

Concept of a settlement

A settlement refers to where a community of people live, with buildings and communication links that function together.

Site – refers to the exact land on which a settlement is built.

Factors that influence the site

* Water – access to water is an important factor
* Relief/micro climate
* Soil – farmers choose well drained fertile land
* Climate
* Tradition

Situation- it refers to the location of a settlement in relation to the surrounding area

**Rural settlements**

Types of settlements

Settlements can be classified in different ways:

1. Classification according to Patterns

Settlements can be identified into three:

* Dispersed pattern
* Houses are far apart

Advantages of dispersed pattern

* Lots of privacy
* More farming land
* Farmer can use modern methods of farming

Disadvantages of dispersed pattern

* Lack of social life
* Easy target for criminals because of the isolation
* Basic services such as schooling are far away expensive transport, electricity and telecommunication
* Nucleated pattern
* Houses are clustered together

Advantages of clustered pattern

* Sharing of ideas and equipment
* Social disadvantage
* Safety advantage
* Community support

Disadvantages of nucleated pattern

* Lack of privacy
* Less space
* Lack of consideration for others (noisy)
* Isolated pattern

Advantages of isolated pattern

* Make your own decisions
* More land available

Disadvantages of isolated pattern

* No development will take place in that area
* Exposed to crime
* No social contact
1. Classification according to Function
* **Rural areas** are said to be unifunctional –meaning there is only ONE activity that is taking place, that is Primary activities
* **Primary activity**- is about the extraction of raw material from the physical environment
* Examples of primary activities are: farming, fishing, forestry and mining
* Urban areas are multifunctional- meaning there have more than one activity, that is, Secondary activities, Tertiary activities and Quaternary activities
* **Secondary activity**- is about manufacturing and processing of raw material into a finished product
* **Tertiary activity**- is about the provision of services.
* **Quaternary activity**- services such as research and development and all aspects of information processing and technology

Classification according to size

* The pyramid above represents classification for both urban and rural areas according to size.
* Hierarchy refers to the ranking of settlements from the smallest to largest.
* Isolated farmstead is the smallest of them all and the megalopolis is the largest.
* Rural areas are smaller in population size and density whereas urban areas are large, built- up areas with a large population and high population density.
* Rural areas – the bottom three in the hierarchy and urban area is from town to megalopolis.
* **Megalopolis** – is the gigantic urban area that forms when many conurbations join together
* **Conurbation**- forms the combination of many towns and cities that merge with each other
* **Metropolis**- refers to a single city that is surrounded by many independent towns
* **City**- a very large urban centre that offers a variety of services including specialized functions such as judicial and financial.
* **Town**- an urban area that does not offer an extensive range of urban functions and occupies a smaller geographical area
* **Village**- a settlement that can have both a rural and urban function
* **Hamlet**- a small group of farmsteads
* **Isolated farmstead**- refers to a single farm which has a main building and can have outbuildings for labourers and sheds.

Rural settlement issues

* People move from rural areas to urban areas because of different reasons.
* When people move from rural areas to urban areas that is called **rural-urban migration**
* Rural urban migration leads to **rural depopulation** ( the number of people in rural areas is decreasing)

What are the causes of rural-urban migration?

* **Push factors** ( force people to move away from rural areas)
* Improved mechanisation, better farming methods leads to loss of jobs
* Natural disasters like droughts and floods
* Over-utilisation of land (leads to soil erosion)
* Poverty
* Unreliable rainfall
* Lack of services ( water, electricity and entertainment)
* Poor housing conditions
* **Pull factors** ( attracts people to the urban areas)
* Employment opportunities
* Better services such as health and medical services
* Better facilities such as education and training
* Better social, cultural and recreational opportunities
* Lower risk of being affected by natural disasters
* Better quality of life
* Transport services available

Consequences of rural depopulation

* Rural areas
* Basic services such as shops and schools close due to decreasing numbers
* Decrease in production
* Buildings and farms are abandoned giving rise to ghost settlements
* Young people are more likely to move to cities leaving behind a large older population
* Family units are broken
* Resources become under-utilised
* Urban areas
* Lack of housing leads to the growth of informal settlements
* Increase in unemployment rate
* Traffic congestion and pollution increases
* Insufficient services to cope with large population
* Increase in crime rate
* Overcrowding and lack of shelter leads to rapid spread of diseases such as TB

**Urban settlements**

An urban settlement is a built up area with many functions and services such as a town or a city.

Land- use in urban areas

* Land in an urban area is used in many different ways
* There may be a central shopping, banking and business area.
* There may be other areas where people live
* There may also be industrial areas with factories and workshops.
* A land use zone is an area in an urban settlement that has one main function
* Examples of land use zones in urban areas:
* CBD
* Transition zone
* Residential zone
* Industrial zone
* Rural urban fringe
* Greenbelts
* CBD ( Central Business District)
* Found in the centre of the city or town
* Has a high degree of accessibility
* Has the tallest buildings with high building density
* Land value is high
* High- order commercial functions
* Transition zone / zone of decay
* Found on the outskirt of he CBD
* Has a mixture of functions ( residential and commercial)
* Buildings are old and dilapidated
* Land values are high because of the future expansion for the CBD
* Residential zone
* Occupies the most amount of urban land
* Variety of residential areas can be identifies:
* High income residential
* Away from the CBD and heavy industry
* Located in areas with good views and sceneries
* Large plots of land
* Have highest land values
* Large gardens
* Houses don’t look the same
* Middle income residential
* Homes are of medium size and can vary from single storey to simplexes and duplexes
* Location varies greatly
* Low income residential
* Located close to industrial areas and public transport
* Houses are very small
* Housing density is high
* Small plots
* Houses look the same
* Industrial zone
* There are two types of industries – heavy industry and light industry
* Heavy industry
* Associated with noise and pollution
* Located away from built up areas and high income residential areas
* Occupies large amount of space
* Locate close to bulk transport facilities
* Buildings are elongated
* Produce goods that are bulky and heavy
* Near major transport routes
* Heavy machinery is used
* Light industry
* Location varies- from within the CBD or the transition zone
* Occupies small spaces and cause less pollution
* Includes industries such as clothing, food and furniture
* Rural urban fringe
* Found on the outskirt of a town or city
* Has a mixture of rural and urban functions
* Land is cheaper
* More open space
* Greenbelt
* Purpose of greenbelt is to prevent uncontrolled growth of urban areas
* Improve the quality of air
* Lowers temperature of the CBD
* Improves the aesthetics of urban environments
* Areas of parks and recreation
* Also known as the lungs of the city – vegetation absorbs CO2 and releases O2
* Shopping centres
* May be close to residential areas, in the CBD or in other places that people can reach easily.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING**

After going through the notes on settlements you are expected to do a research on a settlement that you already know. It may be the area where you live or it be a place where you have spent a lot of time.

Your project should be about eight (8) pages long. Marks are allocated as follow:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This project includes: | Marks |
| A sketch map showing types of land use in the selected area | **8** |
| Description and drawings of special features and landmarks | **6** |
| Evidence of interviews with your parents or siblings | **8** |
| Suggested reasons for the location of this settlement | **6** |
| A discussion of the area’s population growth or decline | **8** |
| Research and discussion of one selected issue( problem) | **8** |
| Careful and neat presentation of all work | **6** |
| Total | **50** |

**Guidelines for your project**

* A description of a selected area and the different types of land use
* Include a sketch map showing different land use zones and landmarks of the area
* Drawings to illustrate both natural and human – made features
* Reasons for the location or position of this settlement
* Population growth or change in the area and possible reasons for this
* One social or environmental issue in the area- examples of social issues- housing, no library, alcohol abuse, access to clean water, service delivery, crime, unemployment and access to electricity.

Examples of environmental issues- flooding, pollution, soil erosion, noise, land-fills sites and traffic