

to the role of city regions or spheres of influence areas in the 'Growth Pole' strategy adopted by the Planning Commission of India in the Sixth Five-Year Plan.

Rural-Urban Fringe

There used to be a clear demarcation, marked by a fort wall and moat, between the administrative urban centre and the rural hinterland in medieval India. Even where walls were absent, the boundary between the traditional Indian city and the rural surroundings was clearly defined. This demarcation between urban and rural areas continues to this day.

But, in case of larger towns and metropolitan cities, this demarcation becomes ambiguous. Physical expansion of urban centres into the rural hinterland is symbolised by new residential colonies, vast stretches of vacant land, partially developed residential plots, a few factories, commercial squatters, warehouses and cold storage plants, timber yards, brick kilns etc. outside the municipal limits. The term **rural-urban fringe** has been used to designate such areas where we have a mixture of rural and urban land use.

Compared to the western cities, occurrence of the rural-urban fringe is a recent phenomenon in India. This is because of a slow growth of Indian cities in the period before independence. It was only with accelerated rural-urban migrations after independence that the rural-urban fringe became a common feature of big cities in India. This indicated the saturation of living space within these cities. The urban growth in India has been characteristically haphazard. The post-independence physical expansion has been brought about mainly by the private developers, industrial entrepreneurs and businessmen whose prime motive was quick profits. Apart from close proximity to these cities, the surrounding rural areas were passive witnesses to emergence of such urban-rural fringe zones. Such a transformation has its social angle too. The villagers find better employment opportunities under conditions of urban expansion. In course of time, the villages acquire a semi-urban way of life. This is a transitional phase between urban and rural societies.

Defining a Rural-Urban Fringe

Rural-urban fringe concept is applicable to other parts of the world also. It is regarded as the area

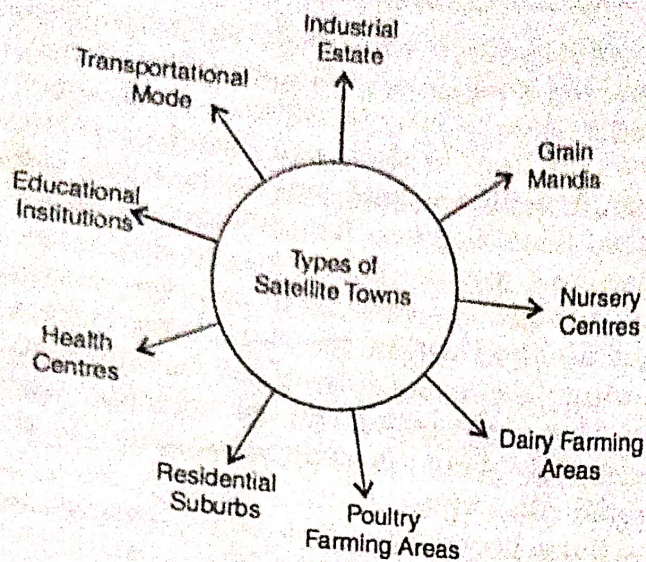
of transition between well-recognised urban land uses and the area devoted to agriculture. But it may not always be easy to define a rural-urban fringe on the basis of these two factors only. For instance, agricultural land may exist within the municipal limits and a universally acceptable set of urban land uses may not be easy to identify. Also, it may not be practical to consider certain parts of a village within the rural zone, certain parts within the urban sphere and certain parts within the rural-urban fringe as this will unnecessarily lead to fragmentation of an integrated rural unit.

The inner boundary of the rural-urban fringe should not be confused with the legal limits of the city. Commonly, the inner boundary of the rural-urban fringe will lie outside the city limits, but within the boundary of the urban agglomeration. The village areas which lie within the rural-urban fringe exhibit the following features.

1. The cropping pattern shows a bias for commercial crops, like fruits and vegetables.
2. The employment pattern is such that at least a section of the adult population regularly commutes to the city for work.
3. Generally, strong linkages with the city are reflected in consistent dependence of villagers on the city for various services.
4. There is a juxtaposition of both rural and urban populations. This happens because of city-dwellers who come to occupy peripheral residential plots, who live in close proximity with the original rural inhabitants, some of whom may be commuting to the city for work.

Structure of the Rural-Urban Fringe

The rural-urban fringe has a complex structure. The city and surrounding areas consist essentially of two types of administrative areas—the municipal towns or gram panchayats and the revenue villages or gram panchayats. The smaller municipal towns close to the main city tend to lose their identity and are, in reality, a part of the geographical city. The quality of services in these towns is comparable to those of the main city. The towns away from the main city maintain their distinct identity and have a distinct set of problems relating to urban amenities and transportation. The quality of these services is generally inferior. The areas in the rural hinterland also exhibit a



certain level of diversity—agricultural land may have been converted to residential or industrial areas or the whole area may be entirely rural, the only link with the city being the daily commuters. Beyond the urban fringe lies the rural fringe consisting of villages only and partly affected by urbanisation.

Suburbs The rural fringe may occasionally contain a small town or a number of well-established townships. These are often designated as inner ring towns. The term suburb is also used in this context, although its usage is confined to the three colonial cities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

Satellite Town 'Satellite' or 'dormitory' towns are suburbs of an urban centre which grow as residential, industrial and educational centres due to their locational advantage. Satellite towns are secondary settlements, which occasionally present a look of twin-towns such as Dehri and Dalmianagar in Rohtas district of Bihar; they may be connected easily with Patna, Barauni, Hajipur, Varanasi and Mughalsarai. The effectiveness of the satellite towns is proved by their tremendous capacity to absorb the excess population of the main city, thus reducing the urban problems of the main city associated with overpopulation. Examples are 'Lake View' of Lucknow, 'Devlok' of Meerut, 'South City' and 'Heritage City' of Delhi. Other well-known examples are Delhi-Noida and Hyderabad-Secunderabad in India.

Satellite towns are prolific particularly in the US. The study of satellite settlements has been considered part and parcel of urban hierarchy for

efficient administration, municipal services and safety. Such satellite towns are of extreme importance, especially in fertile plain regions. Generally, satellite towns are cheaper in terms of cost of living. In the USA, about 24 per cent of the 49 per cent urban population lives in satellite towns.

The Internal Structure of Cities—Theories and Cross-Cultural Comparisons

To understand the internal structure of a city which is a complex phenomenon, one must take into account the city's origin, its growth pattern, function, physical site and the human interaction that have created it.

Urban geographers have developed various models in order to understand urban structure and growth. These models serve the purpose of generalising or simplifying the reality. But, for this reason alone, these models cannot explain all the variations.

Various theories, explaining the internal structure of cities, have been discussed below.

The Concentric Zone Theory

This theory was given by Ernest Burgess in 1925. He envisaged the development of a city outward from a centre in concentric zones in a ripple-like fashion. He made the following assumptions:

- The city grows outwards in the form of five concentric zones or rings as long as there are no physical barriers, such as rivers or hills to distort the pattern.
- The city has a single centre.
- Growth is accomplished by a simple extension of each zone outwards into the next zone.

The characteristic features of each of the five zones can be described as follows (Fig. 8.13).

Zone 1: The Central Business District (C.B.D.) The C.B.D. is the heart of the urban community where the commercial, social and civic activities are concentrated. The heart of the C.B.D. or the *downtown core*, has office buildings, departmental stores, theatres, hotels, banks and civic government buildings, while outside this core are warehouses and light industry.

Zone 2: The Transition Zone Next to the C.B.D. is the transition zone where the central