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All other contrasts pale before this one, which dominates all events, all habits of life, all views of the world." The city is culture par excellence; it is the epitome of culture.

It is mankind's greatest work of art-and of artifice-because it contains all others. Culture, a manufactured environment, surrounds the city man. " It is an environment of bricks and steel and mortar and cement, of bridges and tunnels, of sidewalks and streets, of monuments and buildings, of elevators and subway platforms.

" The city is the product of man and his own achievement. The city " has everything that is ' tawdry' and everything sublime. It holds both hope and despair. It encompasses millions of people, and it can be the loveliest place on earth... It is a vital centre of every civilised society... It is both a place and a state of mind."- Robert Bierstedt.

The Meaning of Urban System of Community: By ' urban system', we mean urban community. Urban Community life represents the city-life. Though the term ' urban' is popularly used, it is not properly defined. There is no single all-inclusive definition of a city or urban community. 1. The urban sociologist Howrad Woolston, in his ' Metropolis', defined the city as a " limited geographic area, inhabited by a largely and closely settled population, having many common interests and institutions, under a local government authorised by the State.

" 2. Park in his " The City" says that the city far from being a mere collection of individuals and of social conveniences is rather a " state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and the organised attitudes and sentiments that

inhere in these customs.” 3. James A. Quinn in his “ Urban Sociology” viewed the city as a “ phenomenon of specialisation”, as a population aggregate whose occupations are nonagricultural. 4. Adna F, Weber in his “ The Growth of Cities” defined the city as any incorporated place with a minimum of 10, 000 inhabitants.

5. Louis Wirth in his essay “ Urbanism as a way of life” writes: “ For sociological purposes a city may be defined as a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals....” Though some sociologists have tried to define the concept of ‘ urban’ no one has given a satisfactory definition so far. Bergel writes, “ Everybody seems to know what a city is, but no one has given a satisfactory definition.” Kingsley Davis writes, “ Much ink has been wasted in trying to define urban”. Maclver remarks, “ But between the two (urban and rural communities) there is no sharp demarcation to tell where the city ends and country begins.” Every village possesses some elements of the city while every city carries some features of the villages.

Different criteria are used to decide a community as urban. Some of them are population, legal limits, types of occupations, social organisations.

Characteristics of Urban Community: 1. Social Heterogeneity: An urban society is heterogeneous.

The city life is complex and many-sided. Wide difference is found in the ways of living of the people. Uniformity and similarity are rarely found. It is more characterised by diversity. As Louis Wirth in his “ Urbanism as a way of life”,

points out “ the greater the number of individuals participating in a process of interaction, the greater the potential differentiation between them....

” Louis Wirth further says that” the city has been the melting-pot of races, peoples and cultures, and a most favourable breeding ground of new biological and cultural hybrids.” He also says that the city “ has brought together people from the ends of the earth because they are different and thus useful to one another, rather than because they are homogeneous and likeminded.” The ways of thinking, behaving, acting, the habits, morals, religious beliefs and practices, food and dress habits, occupations, etc., of the people differ significantly. Differentiation is potent in urban life.

2. Secondary Relations: The urban community is characterised by secondary relations. A city by virtue of its size cannot be a primary group. It is a secondary group. People are indifferent towards one another. Face-to-face, friendly or intimate relations may not be observed among people. Mass media of communication such as telephone, radio, press, post and telegraph, etc.

are often resorted to by the urbanites for contacts In cities people rarely take personal interests in others’ concerns. Superficial form of politeness and manners are commonly found. Physical contact rarely results in intimacy and closeness. Even the neighbours are often found to be strangers. Private interests prevail over the common interests. 3.

The Anonymity of the City Life: The city is an Ocean of strangers. Heavy concentration in a limited space makes it impossible for people to know one another. Every one appears to be a stranger for every other person. There

prevails a state of namelessness in which the individual identities remain unknown. This kind of namelessness that is found in the city is often referred to as anonymity of the city life. The anonymity of the city life makes more complex the problem of social control. 4. Secondary Control: Control of social behaviour is more difficult in a city.

Predominance of secondary relations makes it more complex, the social control. The social behaviour of people is no more regulated by customs, traditions, religion and group standards. Instances of social deviation are commonly found in a city. City is the ocean of strangers. Violations of standards of behaviour may pass unnoticed and unchecked. In this way, informal means of social control are not very effective. Regulation of social behaviour is largely done through the specialised agencies like law, legislation, police, court, etc. The larger the city, the greater becomes the problem of control and more complex the agencies of secondary regulation.

5. Large-scale Division of Labour and Specialisation: An Urban community is known for its large-scale division of labour and specialisation. Specialisation is visible in every walk of life. The larger the city, the greater is the specialisation.

Hence we find different people in society engaging themselves in different kinds of activities like mechanical, commercial, educational, political, recreational, artistic, literary, and scientific and so on. There are skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the artisans, the technicians, the 'paper expert', the 'white-collar' employees, the financiers, the businessmen, administrators, the politicians, the artists and others in society specialising

themselves in some-particular kind of activity or the other. City depends on division of labour also is divided among people on the basis of interests, talents, efficiency, opportunities, age, sex and so on. Division of labour and specialisation are possible because of co-operation.

6. Large-scale Social Mobility: An urban community is characterised by intense social mobility. ' Social Mobility' refers to the movement of people from one social status to another, from lower status to higher status or from poor position to rich position.

An individual's position in an urban community is determined more by his achievements than by his birth. The status is not predetermined. High stress is laid on accomplishments. Urban life in this way is highly competitive. The city with its elaborate division of labour, its competitiveness, its impersonality, has a tendency to emphasise the achievements of people. A city judge's status according to what the individual does and how he speaks and what he accomplishes. An urban society provides for social mobility in countless ways. It provides for occupational mobility and geographic mobility on the one hand, and horizontal social mobility and vertical social- mobility on the other.

Individuals are busily engaged in improving their " career". An element of chance is always present in city. Maclver and Page write-" An accident, a lucky contract, a sudden opportunity seized or missed, a change of style or fad, a happy or unhappy forecast of some event far beyond his control, may revolutionise his prospects in a day." 7.

Individuation. In an urban community people are more individualistic in their attitudes: As Kingsley Davis points out, "The secondary and voluntary character of urban association, the multiplicity of opportunities and the social mobility all force the individual to make his own decisions and to plan his life as a career". The concentration of people in a limited space has the effect of emphasising individuality. The city dweller takes his independent decisions on such matters as education, marriage, occupation, enterprise, adventure, and so on.

He is more selective in his choice and more individualistic in his preferences. He is guided by his own whims and fancies. He is detached except for the attachment of his own choice. He is not tied to any particular relationship or any particular cause.

As Davis points out, "The individual stands over against the whole city, never completely absorbed by any one social group." The city provides wide opportunities for the adventurous spirit of the individuals. Simmel observes, "The city person is free in behaviour, less restrained, more individualistic, more formal and less sympathetic, and less of a conformist than the country person." 8. Voluntary Association: An urban community is the breeding centre of a number of voluntary associations. The size of the urban population, its close proximity, diversity, and easy contact, make it the proper ground for voluntary associations.

"No matter what a person's hobby or vocation, national background or religion, age or colours, he can always find others with a similar basis of interest." As a result new kinds of groups arise, based on extremely

specialised interests. The group must organise or its cause will perish. People normally become members of a number of associations which may be called 'secondary group' in order to fulfil their varied interests.

9. Social Tolerance: Social tolerance characterises city life. Diversity of population, impersonality of contacts and heterogeneity in living style make it almost inevitable for the city people to develop the spirit of tolerance.

" People rub elbows with and become indifferent to extremes of all kinds— extremes of opinion and interest, extremes of poverty and wealth, extremes of education and background." The spirit of tolerance gives the strength of unity in diversity to the life in a city. " Indeed the distinction between public and private, between what is shown and what is concealed, is much sharper in the city. It is the public behaviour that the city regulates, the private behaviour that it ignores. Its control is impersonal and general, that of the country personal and particular."—Kingsley Davis. 10.

Spatial Segregation: Due to its very nature, the city is bound to be overcrowded. It attracts a large number of people from the village areas. It is found that various types of business tend to concentrate in different spots of the city. Occupational groups of people also prefer to live together in distinct zones of a city. That is to say, some kind of functional segregation is found there.

Commercial activities in the form of big departmental stores, show rooms, fancy stores, legitimate theatres, fine hotels, jewellery stores, etc. are located in the centre. The same is true of high-priced professional services-e. g. clinics, law offices, accounting firms, government offices, etc. Retail gro-

cery establishments, filling stations, cleaning and pressing shops, shoe repair shops, garages, drug stores, etc., may be found at the cross-roads of the entire city.

In the city land is so costly that the buildings expand vertically, filling the centre of the city with skyscrapers. 11. Unstable Family: It is said that the urban family is not firmly organised. Many of the traditional functions of the family are transferred to the external agencies. Family is no longer the economic, educational, protective, recreational and effective unit. Family has lost much of its control over its individual members. Individualism is developing even inside the family.

Even the women are getting employed outside the family. Relations between the husband and wife, parents and children are strained to some extent. Some sociologists have even remarked that the urban family is much more disorganised.