**Meaning of Human Settlement, how settlements grow and the major reasons behind the evolution of settlement.**

A human settlement is defined by geographers as a place of a dwelling inhabited more or less permanently by man and woman. To the common men a settlement or a place of a dwelling is identified as a village or a town or a city.

The Oxford dictionary has several definitions for the term settlement and the one that comes closest to the views of geographer is “An assemblage of persons settled in a locality”. A settlement denotes the area of interaction of a given group of people and includes areas of residential, social and economic activity. The idea of settlements therefore includes permanence, habitation and interaction.

**Settlement features**

Settlement can be studied in their terms of site, situation, size, building, function, internal structure, form (shape), and external linkage role in the national and global economy. Site refers on the actual place of ground on which settlement is build situation or position refers to the location to surrounding areas the site and situation of the settlement and the type of buildings in relation to the physical environment and cultural heritage For eg: A village may be sited on a hill or a river bank. Such a site will determine its access to river and the likely fundamental in the rainy season (flooding). The form of settlement in any particular season also refers human perception of the natural.

The functions, linkages and roles revealed the nature of hinterland from which the settlement gets sustenance and the level of overall development settlements have evolve to the present form over a long period of time. Throughout history each new innovation in agriculture and industrial techniques has had the effect on settlement and pattern in all parts of the world developed or developing. In the agricultural era rural settlements predominated. Industrial Revolution gave rise to urban settlement both small and big changing cultural and social modes are clearly reflected in the structure and functions of settlement.

**Evolution and Growth of Settlement**

No one knows exactly which was the first settlement or when they began to grow. Archeological evidence in the Indus valley, Egypt and other sites of early civilization bear testimony to the existence of cities. But even before man built walls of stones, he must have used simple objects such as leaves and thatch, the evidence which still exists in many villages of India where houses are built even today by reeds, bamboo, thatch leaves etc. It is presented that the materials would not withstand the assault of time and therefore not left much trace behind. Historically, the 1st settlement began to form in the Neolithic period agricultural activity has also begun then.

Settlements comes into existence mainly because of the gregariousness nature of man, they are also expression of their response to the environment. When man alienated to himself from nature he gradually created a lifestyle that depended to a large extent on family community and kingship. These interactions between individual and individual, group and group, individual and group need a concrete medium settlement.

Infact it makes sense to think that the 1st settlement were a system of villages which had some degree of interaction rather than just isolated groups of houses having no contact with each other. If not in any other manner, gravitation around the chief of the different groups of the world resulted in different clusters that interacted either in war or in friendship.

Once the process started settlement probably grew rapidly in numbers because of the obvious advantages of sedentary the main unit of human interaction. The help created by the first bonds beyond kingship ties people, they began to identify themselves with places and began to develop a sentimental attachment to these new material environment.

The character of settlement changed over time. Although at the 1st they serve the purpose of protection from natural hazards they later emerged more as a focus of complex activities. Earlier the largely agricultural based population depleted totally on land. New and improved technology brought with them a surplus production of food. A part of population was therefore able to pursue other activities, administration, trade and corruption began part of human life. Their change in the economic system subsequently changed the social structure, settlement morphology and their linkages.

The above discussion convinced us that permanent agriculture required a settlement near a agricultural field. So, a man in the distant past began his settled life in the advent of permanent agriculture.

He had to build houses to take shelter and to get rid of the natural adversities and also get rid of his enemies. Due to obvious reasons, he built houses side by side with other people’s houses. Right in the early days man learnt the necessities of forming a society for his own safety. Thus the concept of collective settlement grows up from the early dawn of human civilization. Sociologists and anthropologists have cited. The following reasons for the growth of human settlements they are:

1. Social
2. Religious
3. Economic
4. Defence
5. Political

**Social Reasons**: Man is a social being and likes to live in a society while living in a society a man get help from others. Wherever it is required it is early to make instruments and implements. If man live together living together in large groups help early man to clear up forests for agriculture big canals for irrigation and to hunt large animal such social reasons made man to live in collective settlement in distant past.

**Religious reasons:**

It was not possible for man to participate in various religious functions individually. So man lived in the past to perform religious activities together. For e.g.: they needed to build a temple, or home of worship for which community support was necessary. So these necessitated collective settlement. Similarly primitive people were required to visit the burial ground or cremation ground where the dead bodies of their family had to be disposed off. So, the no. of their families used to reside near the burial ground or cremation place. These resulted in collective settlement. So, it can be said that religions traditions and beliefs contributed a lot to the growth of collective settlements.

**Defence reasons:**

Collective settlements of a man were a sort of a defense mechanism against natural hazard and ferocious animals as well as group of enemy. The early man realizes that by living together they could successfully fight a fire, or drive away the attacking, enemy or ferocious animals. So, they began to live together.

**Political reasons:** To restore peace and harmony among the settlers they have to be united. Thus the feeling of oneness come into the end and began to live in collective settlement.