

## **Evolution of Human Settlements**

### **Lecture 14**

#### **Global City**

The whole world Global city, is a new 21st century word that has emerged, it can also be described as a world city or an Alpha city, depending on which part of the world you are from. In U.K it is different, in Asian countries, it is referred to differently. But the main factor and the criteria for a global city, pretty much remain the same. It is an important node in the global economic system, in the sense it is just not important for the country it exists in but the entire economy of the world. This comes from a lot of geographical studies and urban studies. The main idea is, this is the result of globalisation. Globalisation has largely created many cities and facilitated the emergence of powerful cities which contribute to global economy and the top most, the cream of these cities is referred to as Global cities. They have a global system of finance and trade. There is a particular hierarchy of importance to the operations as well as, they will have a lot of trade relationships with many other countries. For instance; you could have London in United Kingdom, New York and Los Angeles in United states of America, Mumbai for India. Many other cities like these in different parts of the globe emerge as global cities. So, if you actually look at the terminology of global city, this was something that came about in 1991 by Saskia Sassen who was an urban planner, she came up with the city. The most important point of urban planners is that point of time, right after the phase of urban renewal was the emergence of global economy and trade relationships between different parts of the globe as the technology increased and improved to facilitate such trans-Atlantic or trans-specific relationships. So, first what was referred to as a Mega city? Mega city was primarily only based on population, the size

of the city as well the economics of the city as such with respect to the country. Let's take this a step further and Saskia Sassen came up with a terminology of global city. Yes, the criteria remains the same. Size matters, the population matters but along with this it is even the types of population or the demographic. How cosmopolitan is the population? A truly global city must have cosmopolitan as the population, it cannot have only a single race or only a single particular ethnicity existing in it. So, it should have a particular amount of contribution towards global economy, global businesses. It should have headquarters and many other such criteria. So, Global city was the city of the future at that point of time. We will just look at the criteria. When you actually see a Global city and the status mentioned for it, there are actually a lot of disadvantages and advantages for listing out the criteria. Number one, yes! it is very important for us to know, which are the global cities. It is beneficial, it is very much desired but what usually happens is, the criteria itself is from an example of a particular city and because of that other important cities might be left out because they might not satisfy the same criteria which belong to another part of the country or world. Look at the other kinds of identification, you have a particular benchmark or yardstick value, yes! Let's think about the country of India, if you look at the most important cities, for instance; Hyderabad and bangalore are not called so called metro cities. But Bangalore is a very important global city in terms of, because it is referred to as the Silicon valley of India. So, you cannot just take it at face value but yes, it is a metro city and henceforth, it is a Global city. It necessarily needn't be like that because it is not only the population and the size of the city that matters but what kind of contribution it has towards Global economy? What kind of service

sectors does it have? What kind of producing or manufacturing sections does it have? So, if it becomes less cosmopolitan or less internationally renowned, it can later be declared as a non-global city or it can be removed from that particular status as well. If we look at the characteristics of a particular global city, there are a number of them. So, you have International financial services, so it should have a financial sector, insurance sector, real estate, banking, accountancy and marketing. Headquarters of several multinational corporations. It could be governmental corporations, it could be private, it could be both and when I say government, I mean things like UNICEF, UNESCO on a global scale. The existence of financial headquarters, a stock exchange and major financial institutions, domination of trade and economy of a large surrounding area. Major manufacturing centers with port and container facilities. Considerable decision making power on a daily basis and at a global level as well. Centres of new ideas and innovation in business economics, culture as well as politics. Centres of media and communications for global networks. Dominance of the national region with great international significance. So apart from being manufacturing centres, its important that there is a service sector as well to support those manufacturing centres and when you have financial important headquarters, at the same time you need to have manufacturing headquarters as well. So, when you think of a city like Bombay, it should have a stock exchange, yes! It has a global headquarters for a number of other cities, it is considered one of the most globally advanced cities in terms of financial and economical, as well as statistical type of companies. So, it actually supports a lot of the companies that exist in other parts of the world, it provides a lot of service related activities, it could be both outsourced services as well as

in house servicing technology as well. There should be a high percentage of residents employed in the services sector as well as information sector. High quality educational institutions including renowned universities both international with student attendants as well as research facilities, multi-functional infrastructure offering some of the best legal medical and entertainment facilities in the country. So, if you actually look at the characteristics that we have just listed out, you can see that there is a massive stress upon manufacturing and service sector. There is no talk of anything to do with lower income groups or the labour sector. That is one of the main disadvantages of a Global city, without the labour sector, the service sector as well as the manufacturing sector, it is not going to work. You need to have the blue collared workers, without them you are not going to have a successful economy. When you describe the characteristics or the importance of a global city, this particular segment gets completely ignored and that is one of the main drawbacks of characterizing a global city based on a city that is already renowned. For instance; this was done based on Los Angeles and New York. So, there is a complete absence of recognizing the importance of a labour sector. If you look at the different kind of variants, within the global city what is it that has led to the description of a global city or the characteristics of a global city. In 2004, the rankings that had been released acknowledged several indicators while continuing to rank city economics more heavily than political or cultural factors. So, in the next category, 1998, another kind of cities came into being. So called "Alpha" World cities that possess four sub-categories. You have 'Beta' world cities, 'Gamma' world cities and additionally cities with 'High sufficiency' or 'Sufficiency' presence. So, when you think of these, it is just a way to characterize cities for easier understanding of

different urban scenarios. If you consider all of them to be global cities, it is difficult to study the nuances of every city. So, by creating sub-categories and further other sub-categories, we actually are able to understand the nuances of every individual city based on the factors that city is particularly based on. Now, if you look at the Alpha+ cities, you have London and New York which are vastly more integrated with a global economy than other cities. Then, you have the Alpha + cities which complement London and New York by filling advanced service niches for the global economy. These are Tokyo and Paris for examples. Then you have the Alpha an Alpha-cities which are the link between major economic regions into the world economy. So, examples of these are Los Angeles and Moscow. Beta Level Cities are cities that link moderate economic regions into the world economy. Gamma Level Cities are cities linking smaller economic regions into the world economy. So, Gamma level would be detroit. Sufficiency level cities are cities that have a sufficient degree of services so as to not be obviously dependent on other world cities which pretty much covers most of the urban centers and the world.

Now if you look at the power index or the Global power city index which pretty is the main important way of describing a global city. You have six overall categories; economy, research and development, cultural interaction, Livability, Environment and Accessibility. Amongst each category, you have other indicators as well which are more specific to that geographic location.

### **Origin of Cities**

**Now**, if you actually come to the origin of cities, which we have actually dealt with, the whole fact, when you use the word city in the past when

I am talking about the origin of cities, it is very deceptive because the current situation of cities being distinguished from towns is because of size and population but that is after thousands of years of urbanization and rapid globalization. But five thousand years ago, even with a meager inhabitant population of thousand or five thousand, they were still considered cities because of the way of life at that point of time. So, right after the neolithic revolution when you had agriculture which was developing as an occupation and a settled structure was developing and there was a population increase, that was the first time we had a recognized settlement or a city settlement. Initially even though agriculture was the main base, there were still rural settlements, but as agriculture grew further and it could substantially support a larger population, it was considered a city. So, the progressive population growth allowed the transformation of these rural settlements into urban centres, which involved the expansion of the cultivated land at the expense of vegetation. So, new cities have appeared involving a continuous population and surface growth. So, this further grew because of weapons, their discovery and invention of other tools and other manufacturing equipment. So, all of this made sure that the city as such or the domination of a city was increasing.

The origin and growth of urbanization in the world. So, if you look at urbanized cities, societies, how did it actually come into being? That happened in the 19th and 20th Century as a result of industrialization. That was the first time you had an urban centre or an urban core and from there you had all the villagers coming in for a better life and they moved into the cities. This process of urbanization has moved rapidly since the 1800s till now, where the peak is not yet in sight because currently you can't say, inspite of so much of development in

technology, you cannot say that urbanization has stopped. Even today, there are a lot of migrants coming into every city from rural areas in search for a better life. A dimension of the rate of urbanization in the older industrial countries is being compensated by an increase in the rate in the underdeveloped areas. So, in a developed country, if so called urbanization is reduced, but it still continues at a greater pace in developing and underdeveloped countries. So, if you look at the definition of a city for an archeologist defining it in the olden days, it could just mean a few hundred people, a larger area with a couple of public buildings. But now, at that point of time there were severe limitations both on the size of the city as well as the population because at that point of time, the death rate was also quite high. So, if you have actually look into it in history, the first cities, even though small had to be distinguished from towns that appeared between 6000 and 5000 BC, the mounts of Mohenjodaro in Sind cover only a square mile. Harappa in Punjab had a walled area visible in 1853 with a perimeter of 2 1/4 miles, these are evidently cities with about 5000-15,000 inhabitants. So, even though in today's context this might not be considered to be a city, definitely with respect to the facilities and with the way it was laid out, it is definitely considered a city. The region that saw a later and greater urban development was further north, the Greco-Roman world of Europe which was flourishing during the period 600 - 400 A.D. Iron tools and weapons, alphabetic writing, improved sailboats, cheap coinage, more democratic institutions, systematic colonization- all of this tended to increase production, stimulate trade and expand the effective political unit. A few cities reached a substantial size at this point of time. Athens for example, reached it's peak in the 5th Century B.C, and achieved a population between 12000

to 18000. Urbanization has gone ahead and has spread much faster and reached greater proportions during those last 20th and 21 Century than any other point in world history. Later, the regeneration of the trade, stimulated the redevelopment of the Western European countries, which become again centres of product exchange with markets and fairs. At one point of time, post industrial revolution there was a lull because of the crash but later again the western European countries picked and they became of centres of product exchange and markets. These cities suffered the most from food crisis, as well as epidemics which periodically hit the pre-industrial societies. Pre-industrial societies when you had lack of hygiene and too many people coming in for no reason at one point of time, over congestion, all of this was happening at the same time. Black death/ the plague, for instance, was one of the deadliest pandemics that struck Europe in the second half of the XIV century.

Cities have always received for rural population that will never end and will never change. Even today there will be a lot of people coming in from the rural centres, to the urban centres, across the world in different ways. This fact has of course been speeded up by the Industrial Revolution and it has caused a great agglomeration since cities were not planned for fitting such a great number of people nor the Industrial activities they were developing. Now, apart from water pollution, there is also air pollution, which together with the lack of hygiene causes great public health problems.

Now, when you are looking at the XI and the XII centuries, migrating into the city and breathing its air was a revolution for the rural population, since it released people from feudal slavery. So, which is



the better thing. They were stuck between a hard place and a fire, both the places were not offering them a great life but they had decided that they have not experienced the industrial revolution and everything about it struck awe in man's mind and man's heart. "Oh! A machine is able to do all of this, let's go work here. It is going to take us and our children to a brighter future", it is exactly what farmers think today about our cities, they will be having a good life with respect to clean air, clean water and good hygiene in the places they are but in search of a better life, this better life could be defined in other ways as well. In search of a so called better life they move into cities; congested, overpopulated, over polluted houses. So, later the industrial revolution, turned the air of many of these cities unbearable, it was completely considered unsafe to live in certain cities because of the smog and the pollution. The urban environment has been degraded by its own growth which has been often excessive and has entailed the continuously increasing land occupation, air and water pollution, Climate modification, noise, light pollution as well as generation of solid waste. The final result is the contamination of the entire environment which definitely brings about certain serious public health issues. A city of a million inhabitants today, is not the sort of a place, that a city of the same number was in 1900 or 1850, moreover the emergence of giant cities of five to fifteen million, something new has definitely been added. Such cities are the creatures of the 20th Century. It is reflected of this period where there is such a growth of population.

Our present degree of urbanization in advanced countries is still so new that we had no clear idea of how such complete world organization, will actually affect human society. But the chances are that these effects will definitely be profound and felt really soon. Rurality is going

to soon disappear leaving only a new kind of urban existence. The only reason a rural atmosphere still exists is because the whole point of urban farms or urban agriculture has not caught on. If that too, catches on, the whole rurality will completely disappear, the whole backbone of a particular country will also disappear. For instance; even in India as a developing country, we do have a lot of global cities, we have a lot of trade with other parts of the world but agriculture is still the backbone of any economy. In India, it has to feed million people living in a city, million people have to be fed in a city and it is only because of agriculture existing away from the city, that this is possible.

### **Impact of Global economy on Cities**

Now if you think of urbanization in the past 20 years, first is the urbanization of history, the impact of the past 25 years is far more profound because you have to factor in the overall improvement of incomes and quality of life experienced by the developing countries. The productive contribution of urbanization to national welfare may change as a result of global economic processes. But it is more than just providing half of a GDP, it is not sufficient to say that 'yes' a country is doing well by discussing only its GDP. The economic future of countries will depend to an increasing degree on the productivity of an urban based economic activities. So, despite the increase in urban incomes and urban productivity, there is growth in urban poverty in most countries. So, if you actually say a country is steadily growing, how is it that a greater and greater percentage of poor people in the same country? Urban poverty and unemployment are directly affected by globalisation. Absolute poverty is accompanied by growing inequality within cities, this is mainly due to skewed allocation of resources within

cities. As the global economy comes to value these higher wage skills, existing patterns of inequality are being worsened. Like we discussed a few minutes ago, the labour sector is given equal importance to that of this service sector. Yes, the service sector could be more educated or more skilled but that doesn't mean that the labour sector can be completely ignored. With the absence of a labour sector in a city, that city will perish over a couple of days because yes! economically everything will be working, the banks will be running, everything will be running but without the backbone of the labour industry, that is not going to be possible and that's what causes the main inequality or divide within a city. Economic distress in all parts of the world is accompanied by, worsened by declining social cohesion i.e you have crime, violence, drugs, etc. There is no particular reason we can attach to why does this happen in a growing global economy but its definitely responsible for these patterns of behaviour. It is indirectly definitely responsible. The relative weakness of public institutions and public policy, the importance of non-public actors in urban management therefore cannot be attributed to globalization but to accelerated privatization. That is one of the main differences that one has to understand. In a country like India, globalization is always mixed with privatization because as such, our government does not participate in any global trade in the sense, government bodies. I am not talking about the government as such, with regard to imports and exports. But because of such public institutions and public policies, it is not the direct result of globalization but it is the result of accelerated privatization which creates a divide and a difference.

Weak Centralized public institutions have given way towards decentralizing of responsibility for policy and services. Decentralization

has also strengthened local participatory processes and permitted higher levels of accountability and transparency. It is clear that urban environmental problems are increasingly understood. This is not in most cases, a result of globalization - foreign capital may be less sensitive to sustainable uses of locally available resources. So, all of these are how this urbanization has happened over the past 25 - 30 years.

The last characteristic of an urbanized society or the World's urbanization experience is the parallel process of urban concentration in megacities and the accelerated growth of secondary cities and towns. Though this process would have occurred regardless of globalization, it would have definitely been slower for us to comprehend the changes. It is apparent that global economy increases local vulnerability to macroeconomic changes mainly because of pace of change and there is a lag in the response. Now, if you look at the indicators of impact and change; two areas where short term changes may occur are; Export markets and the tourism industry. The other impacts may have longer incubation periods. In the sense, you will not see the impact right away but it will take a couple of years or maybe even a decade for us to see the effect. The physical changes in land use is another important impact. Many foreign investments change the existing city plans, grids, layouts and even codes of land use of construction. This is definitely a direct manifestation of globalization. For instance; in a city like Chennai, compared to Mumbai, the FSI, the level of skyscrapers is definitely lesser than other cities. Mumbai has far more skyscrapers than Chennai and Chennai for instance has never encouraged it because, for us space was never a constraint. We believed in growing in all four directions vs now because of competing

with other cities to get a headquarters or the so called IT industry over here, we have begun developing skyscrapers and taller buildings which needn't be true to the urban fabric or true our building codes. So, codes and public policies are being modified to suit these needs.