**Urban Life**

When someone leads a double life, the Chinese say that he is trying to stand in two boats. A certain amount of wobbling is unavoidable, and a big fall is likely.

Today, cities across the world are managing a dual existence. They are cultural, architectural, economic, and scientific centers, attracting the vanguard in fashion, art, and ideas. Waves of newcomers, however, are inundating cities around the world and straining their infrastructures. Cities’ tendencies to devour enormous resources make many wonder whether they are failing not only residents, but also the environment at large. How long can cities maintain their balance before falling overboard?

2006 marks the first year in history that more than half of the world’s people live in a town or city instead of the countryside. Cities have long attracted dreamers expecting to make their mark, or families hoping for a better life. Immigrants in turn have been the lifeblood of cities, bringing diverse customs and making it possible to find international foods, languages, and ideas on a single street.

Today, however, more than one billion people, a sixth of the Earth’s population, live in city slums. They are not always drawn to the city, but are pushed from the countryside by poverty, conflict, or natural disasters. Cities across the world are increasingly home to millions of migrant laborers. Poverty has pushed this “floating population” from their rural homes into temporary jobs and uncertain status in the city.

Cities in fact function like complex organisms: they are not self-sustaining, but need efficient systems to bring in food and water, while removing trash and sewage. Cities today require communication lines and sources of power, like imported coal, a nearby hydro-electric dam, or nuclear plant.

People must be able to get into, out of and around a city. As a rule, people are willing to spend twenty minutes to commute to work. But with faster transport systems, such as freeways, subways, trains, buses, and bike lanes, people can travel farther in a short time, and a city can grow larger.

Archaeologists excavating Harrapa, the Indus Valley city in present-day Pakistan, have discovered grid streets running east to west and north to south that date to almost 5,000 years ago. Today, urban planners and local governments design public transport, business and residential zones, parks, schools, and low- or mixed-income housing. Governments strategically encourage development through spending public funds or offering lower taxes to businesses and citizens.

All the while, planners must balance growth with historical preservation. Beijing, for instance, has in the last ten years sacrificed its famous labyrinth of hutong alleyways, while renovating imperial treasures like the Summer Palace and Forbidden City.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Urban Life**

Urban life refers to the life of the people living in towns and cities. The advantages and disadvantages of Urban life has been discussed in this article.

**Advantages**: The advantages of urban life are many.

There are good roads and well-built houses in urban areas.

Transport facilities of modern towns and cities are highly developed. We have trams, buses, motorcars for quick and comfortable transport.

In large towns, there are good chances of getting suitable and pleasant occupations.

All kinds of physical comforts are within our easy reach. In the heat, of the day we can use the electric fan, cooler, and air-conditioner. At night, we switch on the electric light.

There are good school and colleges for education.

There are hospitals and clinics for proper medical treatment of sick people.

There are clubs, libraries, cinema houses, and theatres for our entertainment and recreation .

We encounter people of different states and with foreigners. We develop a love for humanity.

People get the opportunity to make friends with tastes similar to one’s own.

All prejudices and superstitions soon wear off.

**Disadvantages**: There are various disadvantages of urban life.

The towns are overcrowded.

Many of the streets are dirty and unpleasant due to noise, smoke and dust.

The density of population is quite high in urban areas. Too many people live and we do not feel easy.

The rattling sound of buses, motor cars and other vehicles always disturb us.

There are dangers to health in crowded cities. Smoke and dust fill the air. Hence, urban life is unhealthy for want of fresh food and fresh air.

In the bigness of the city we lose the common human touch.