CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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In the past few decades, many large cities of the developing countries have experienced extremely high growth in population. It is estimated that more than one-third of the population of the developing countries live in cities. Nearly two-thirds of this increase is likely to occur in Asia where India and China would account for nearly 60 per cent. The lack of urban infrastructure and differences in housing pattern accompanied by an accelerated growth of urban population both due to natural rate of growth and influx of a large number of migrant has led to the creation of squatter settlements in and around the urban areas.

The accelerated pace of urban and industrial development has brought a host of problems in towns and cities of the developing countries like inadequate urban infrastructure, changes in housing pattern, deteriorating environment etc. Urbanism as a way of life can be measured and analysed through the housing and interactional patterns of the residents of a city. According to the Wirthian model, the urban interactional pattern is characterised by segmental and transitory relationships and more by secondary than primary contacts. Louis Wirth (1938) describes city as a relatively large, dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals. Hence, size, density and heterogeneity create changes in the urban housing pattern, and primary group relationships are inevitably replaced by secondary contacts that are impersonal, segmental, superficial, transitory and often predatory in nature. As a result, the city dweller becomes anonymous, isolated, rational, and sophisticated.

The process of urbanisation in India as elsewhere has led to an increase in size, density, and heterogeneity of population at certain locality. The nature and trends of this process is necessary to comprehend the mechanics and dynamics of housing pattern and social relationships in an urban milieu. It would spell out in brief the rate of urbanisation in India explicating also the growing size, density, and heterogeneity of population. India, though predominantly an agricultural country, had long known

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the city way of life. The cities of ancient and medieval India were the foci of culture and civilization, seats of great empires and kingdoms, headquarters of district and provincial governments, outposts of military organisations, centres of trade and commerce and places of religious pilgrimage. Most of these cities were essentially of pre-industrial type, mainly dependent on agriculture and feudal economy. It was only by the end of the 19th century that cities with large-scale industries began to emerge on the Indian landscape.

Indian Census Reports have been the main source for assessing the trends of urbanisation in India. Ever since the first regular census in 1881, almost all census report has provided information on urban growth. The growth of urban population during the last nine decades (1901-1991) has been marked by considerable fluctuations in the rate of urbanisation. Increase in urban population has been modest upto 1931 and a fairly rapid (31.97 per cent and 41.42 per cent) between 1931-41 and 1941-51 respectively. The decade between1951 and 61 experienced a reduction in the growth rate of urban population (26.41 per cent) while the next decade (1961-71) experienced an increase in growth rate (38.23 per cent). The average annual exponential growth rate of urban population during the decade 1981-91 was 3.09 per cent, relatively lower than those registered during the decades 1961-71 (3.21 per cent) and 1971-81 (3.83 per cent).

It is noted that during 1981-91 period there is a decline in the rate of urban population growth, the rate of growth of rural population has marginally accelerated resulting in a deceleration in the speed of urbanization. The urban population growth is due to rural to urban migration, natural increase of urban population, status change of settlements (reclassification and declassification) and jurisdictional changes in the boundary of urban centres. A large proportion of the urban population tends to concentrate in big cities which have become the fastest growing urban settlements. Even in the less urbanised states, large cities and metropolitan areas have recorded a much higher rate of increase. Dominance of industry, commerce and administrative services in the occupational structure are characteristics associated with these trends

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in large cities. As a result, the problems of over-crowding and pressure on essential services have now reached crisis proportions in these cities. Slums are proliferating and even the posh areas of these cities are experiencing pressures of population growth. A number of smaller cities have also experienced rapid growth due to expansion of industries or administrative structures. Cities like Coimbatore, Ludhiana, Baroda, and Ghaziabad represents this category. The large-scale public and private sector industrial units have been located in backward areas and new townships have sprung up around them. The process of planned development has brought about a dispersal of industries in turn leading to a little deconcentration of population.

Table 1.1. Trend of Urbanization in India: 1901 to 1991

Census year	No.of UAs/towns	Total Population	Total Urban Population	Percent Urban	Decenial Growth (%)	Annual exponential growth rate
1901	1827	238396327	25851873	10.84	-	-
1911	1815	252093390	25941633	10.29	0.35	0.03
1921	1949	251321213	28086167	11.18	8.27	0.79
1931	2072	278977238	33455989	11.99	19.12	1.75
1941	2250	318660580	44153297	13.86	31.97	2.77
1951	2843	361088090	62443709	17.29	41.42	3.47
1961	2365	439234771	78936603	17.97	26.41	2.34
1971	2590	548159652	109113977	19.91	38.23	3.21
1981	3378	683329097	139462547	23.34	46.14	3.83
1991	3768	844324222	217177625	25.72	36.19	3.09

Source: Census of India, 1991.

One of the noticeable features of large Indian cities is their combination of very high population density in relatively small areas and relatively low population density over other large areas. The land use pattern is a highly mixed one and differs markedly from the usually segregated land use. Residential land use is plagued by high population density. Another characteristic of urbanisation in India has been the

heterogeneity of population in terms of age, occupation, education, caste, language, religion etc. Large cities of India with their industrial economy have attracted populations based on all types-regional, linguistic, and caste.

The trends of urbanisation in India, increasing size, density, and heterogeneity of population in large Indian cities provides a backdrop for examining the nature of urbanism in India. This backdrop suggests that while urbanisation in India has many resemblances to that of West, it also differs from the latter in important details. These differences are significantly related to the nature of urbanism in India or for that matter in all developing societies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Urbanism in India is primarily based on a system of relationships created by special structural features such as the population density of the settlement, residential instability due to transience of the in-migrant population, caste and linguistic heterogeneity, an unbalanced age and sex structure, low and differential rates of literacy, economic and occupational differentiation, housing pattern and the embryonic form of social stratification. Each society has its own structural and ethical antecedents, which interact with the introduced physical and social attributes of cities associated with modern industry, and so create distinctive forms of urbanism.

Cities and towns differ in the pattern of houses ranging between spacious dwellings of the rich to miserable levels of the poor. Housing provides many kinds of services such as shelter, security, comfort, and feeling of independence, privacy, and social status. The monetary and intrinsic value of a house depends not only on the degree of privacy it affords but also on the extent to which it is a home in terms of: structure, which refers to all the physical attributes of the dwelling; accessibility and utilities, which refers to the tangible services rendered to the dwelling unit by the general community; rights, which refers to community's legal norms; and neighbourhood, which refers to the surrounding houses and area (Smith, 1970). It constitutes one of the most universal forms of material culture and holds several roles simultaneously in the working out life-styles and residential patterns in the city.

Housing is not only related to physical structure of a house but also planning of houses in such a way that people residing as neighbours are able to build good and healthy neighbourhood ties. The neighbourhood is the general area in which neighbouring take place between resident neighbours. The ethnic, cultural, and social characteristics of the neighbourhood are such that the inhabitants share a common set of standards. The people of a given area should feel a sense of community life by establishing neighbourhood relations. This together with their use of local facilities promotes a psychological unity whereby neighbourhood inhabitants feel they belong together and to the area. This socially and psychologically united group inhabits an area that is marked off from the rest of the city by distinct, clearly recognized boundaries. Physical facilities which do not facilitate neighbourhood relations or which hinder the emergence of neighbourhood community feeling would develop houses without a sense of homeliness and sense of belonging among the neighbours. Physical, social and institutional change has brought changes in the housing pattern and also removed the activity of the neighbourhood. Increasing independence among young people and the related decline in importance of the joint or extended family as a primary group have brought changes in the neighbourhood activity. At the institutional level, the spread of service industries and public welfare facilities has reduced the need for neighbouring activities. It is possible to conclude that the traditional neighbourhood with high levels of mutual help and information sharing remains today only in certain circumstances or places.

Social scientists employ a variety of theoretical orientations while interpreting the city's social and ecological structures. The first of these orientations is attributed to Max Weber who drew attention to the contrast between the cities of the East and the West. In his extensive studies of the great oriental cultures in which he particularly reached for the inter-dependence of religious and economic behaviouring patterns. He stressed cultural or social values in accounting for the ecology and social structure of cities, including the patterning of technology. Another theoretical orientation is linked with the `Urbanisation School' in Sociology. The school drew heavily upon the writings of Simmel, Tonnies, and Durkhiem that explains the patterns and processes

involved in the transition from a pre-industrial or agrarian way of life to an industrial and urban order. It considered the city as a variable for explaining human ecology and social structure of settlement. The third theoretical orientation refers to the Technological School of Sjoberg, which gives primacy to technology as a key-variable for explaining the social and ecological structure of the city. The contemporary sociological conception of cities and of urban life is based largely on the formulations of the Urbanisation School of Louis Wirth.

A brief appraisal of the theoretical orientations suggests that attempts are made to explain the urban social situations in terms of culture, human ecology, social structure of settlement and technology. These are possibly successful in explicating the urban social situation at the macro-level, but do not explain it at the micro-level. Neither they explain the differences in urbanism within the same city or the persistence of traditional forms in various phases. So the present study aims at an examination of the nature and magnitude of housing pattern and neighbourhood relationships in an Indian urban milieu. The problem of housing pattern and neighbourhood relationships has been selected for study because it holds the key to an understanding of the nature of urbanism.