CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Cities are spaces of differences. They have been acting as arenas where social differentiation has been manifested spatially. The process of urbanization is always accompanied by segmentation and differentiation of urban communities. According to Marcuse and Van Kempen (2002:11), “cities have always been divided…along a number of lines” and this spatial concentration of population group may take place along “lines of nationality, class, income, wealth, occupation, religion, race, colour, ethnicity, language, age household composition, personal cultural preference and lifestyle”. It has also been argued that urban societies have been marked by profound social differentiation along lines of “wealth, recency of arrival, or ethnicity” White (1998:1). This social differentiation within urban space has been determining residential pattern which in turn reshapes and sometimes, accentuates social inequality thereby affecting the quality of life (QOL) of urban residents.

Residential pattern is a by-product of intra-urban differentiation. Social differentiation among urban population creates different types of residential areas for different social groups. Similar residential areas or localities tend to occupy a segment of urban area usually in the form of zones or sectors due to various processes occurring therein. In this way, residential areas arranged in a more or less regular fashion to form pattern within a city and this physical arrangement of inhabited spaces occurred in a specific environment where the prevailing socio-economic system and physical environment interacts in sustained manner. Residential pattern, therefore, is not always similar through time and at all places. The underlying processes of residential differentiation in western developed cities and underdeveloped cities are
not always similar. Similarly, hill and mountainous cities may show different residential pattern from plain cities.

In western industrialized cities, peripheral suburbs as well as localities along the best existing transportation lines, hilltops and land along lake, bay, river and ocean fronts are the home of the richer section while inner city areas and hill slopes are dominated by the poorer working class (Burgess, 1925; Hoyt, 1939). On the contrary, inner city areas in less developed and Mediterranean cities are occupied by social elites (Berry, 1963; Schnore, 1965; Leantidou, 1990). The latter case is basically a typical characteristic of pre-industrial cities (Sjoberg, 1960) where the political, religious and economic elites concentrate on city core areas. The city centre holds prestige and is socially and economically desirable as it provides easy access to prominent political, religious and economic institutions.

The physical form or spatial structure of a city is considered to be mainly determined by differentiation of urban population along socio-economic status, family status and ethnic status. Apart from socio-economic status, demographic and cultural attributes like age and family related measures and racial or ethnicity measures were found to bear significant values in the process of social differentiation. Among them, socio-economic factor is predominant in most cities and the classical urban land-use theories have been criticized for their economic biases by putting emphasis of socio-economic factor in determining intra-urban differentiation while neglecting demographic and cultural attributes (Pacione, 2009; Knox and Pinch, 2010). Another approach of urban social geography called ‘social area analysis’ gives due importance to other dimensions or axes of urban social differentiation.
It may, however, be noted that socio-economic factor, demographic attributes and ethnicity are not the sole determining factors of residential differentiation. Studies in different societies have maintained that residential patterns are more influenced by historical circumstances and cultural milieu than by purely economic reasoning in India (Chatterjee, 1960; Fakhruddin, 1991) and land-use planning and an allocation system based on resources and political influence in socialist country like China (Sit, 1999) as well as in multi-ethnic states like Ireal (Yiftachel, 2001). All these studies have indicated that residential patterns emerged through different processes of urbanization under different socio-economic settings.

Analysis of residential differentiation could not be confined to the two-dimensional urban space alone. The accelerating verticalization of cityscape in almost all types of terrain has compelled us to reconsider the role of multi-storey buildings in the process of residential differentiation. Although the classical urban land-use models have included the role of physical environment like ‘hillslope’, ‘hilltops’ and ‘high grounds’ in the process of residential choice, they failed to take into account the ‘vertical differentiation’ which is an important characteristic of Mediterranean cities (White, 1984; Leontidou, 1990; Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001).

Therefore, residential pattern is conceptualized here as the process of residential differentiation and its spatial implications, not only in two-dimensional space but also in three-dimensional space. Analysis of residential differentiation implies analysis of socio-economic processes on a specific environment. In fact, socio-economic changes in a particular place or region are best articulated within cities and these changes produce distinctive residential areas and through time, accentuate and reshape patterns of socio-spatial inequality. This reshaping has taken a spatial form in cities, not only in relation to the relevance of space for access to
resources such as jobs or housing, but also in terms of people’s conceptions of place. Quality of life - a concept that encompasses both quality of places and individual satisfaction - is therefore intrinsically linked with urban spatial structure.

Quality of life (QOL) is a broader concept of development which was usually measured by gross national product (GNP) related measures. After the 1950s, there was a call to conceptualize development as ‘social well-being’ which is a broader and more encompassing term that takes into account a wide range of indicators to evaluate human conditions (Veenhoven, 1996). Thus the concept of social well-being was introduced based on the argument that human condition should be evaluated on a wider range of indicators than just income whether at the national level or through national aggregates (Gregory et al., 2009). It was thought that evaluation of ‘development’ would be more encompassing if it includes ‘social indicators’ or those indicators pertaining to social well-being like education, economy, health, public safety, social and culture and government administration or civic participation. Social indicators, in fact, are different from common indicators of development. They have been defined as “statistics, statistical series, and all other forms of evidence that enable us to assess where we stand and are going with respect to our values and goals” (Bauer, 1966:1). The emerging concept of QOL was then introduced into geography during the 1970s in studies of territorial social indicators (Smith, 1973; Knox, 1975) which was a part of social indicators movement.

A geographic aspect of QOL is suggested in the work of Canadian philosopher, McCall (1975) who maintained that from geographical perspective, the concept of QOL refers to quality of life in a certain region of the earth’s surface. Myers (1987) has given geographical definition of QOL as the shared characteristics residents experience in places and the subjective evaluations residents’ make of those
conditions. Pacione (2002), however, maintained that the concept of the urban as a quality is related more to the meaning of urban places and the effect of the urban milieu on people's lifestyles in contrast to definition of the city as a physical entity.

Quality of Life (QOL) may be disaggregated into objective and subjective components. Objective QOL is usually measured at aggregate population and objective indicators are those which are related to observable facts that are derived from secondary data or data drawn from sample to measure concrete aspects of the built and natural environment as well as the socio-economic aspects of the population. On the other hand subjective QOL relates to assessment and evaluation of personal well-being “based on primary data collected through sample surveys in which people’s perceptions of quality of life domains are measured on scaled attributes relating to those QOL domains” (Stimson and Marans, 2011:33).

1.1 Significance of the Study

Space, due to its banality, had been obscured in the academic explanation for a long time. Social scientists used to put emphasis on sociological and historical explanations rather than geographical explanation on socio-economic processes (Soja, 2010). However, with the introduction of critical social theory in geography after the 1970s, a transdisciplinary diffusion of spatial thinking or in other words, a spatial turn in social science was witnessed and carried forward vigorously by scholars from various disciplines. The hitherto neglected spatial perspective then formed an important part of analysis alongside social and historical perspectives. Doreen Massey (1984:52) has forcefully argued that “For geography matters. The fact that processes take place over space…Just as there are no purely spatial processes, neither are there any non-spatial social processes”. It has also been argued that “everything that is
social is simultaneously and inherently spatial, just as everything spatial, at least with regard to the human world, is simultaneously and inherently socialized” (Soja, 2010:6).

Socio-spatial inequality is now an important subject matter of human geography. In his monumental text on urban geography, Pacione (2009) posited that one of the main tasks of urban geography is to study socio-spatial similarities and contrasts that exist between and within towns and cities. Similarly, social geography, another important branch of geography is considered to be “concerned with the ways in which social relations, social identities and social inequalities are produced, their spatial variation, and the role of space in constructing them” (Pain et al., 2001:1).

An important question to urban social geographers, therefore, is to study the pattern of residential location within cities, the factors that determine the creation of social space on the basis of socio-economic class, demographic status and ethnicity and the processes operating the continuation of socio-spatial differentiation as well as the behavioural consequences of differentiation. These questions have been nicely put forwarded by Knox and Pinch (2010:1) as

“Why do city populations get sifted out according to race and social class to produce distinctive neighbourhoods? What are the processes responsible for this sifting? Are there any other characteristics by which individuals and households become physically segregated within the city? How does a person’s area of residence affect his or her behaviour? How do people choose where to live, and what are the constraints on their choices?…Thus, spatial pattern of socio-economic inequality has been an important area of research among geographers”. 
Geographers have important voices in tackling of accelerating social differentiation as every social process takes place in space. Spatial or territorial justice is a newly invented concept that deals with justice from a geographical perspective. The concept of territorial justice is about “the most appropriate distribution between areas…according to the needs of the population of that area” (Davies, 1968:16). The concept implicitly implies equitable distribution of resources and without it, social justice is almost impossible (Johnston, 1975). From the perspective of ‘spatial or territorial justice’, residential differentiation and segregation are unjust since they have defied the concept of social justice as certain social groups of people are segregated and differentiated from other social groups.

Inequitable distribution of resources has negative impacts on a person’s quality of life. Cities in both developed and to a lesser extent, developing countries are known to develop ‘gentrified spaces’ and ‘gated communities’ that usually occupy the best locations while the poorer and disadvantage people are usually found at the least desirable and least accessible locations. In this way, poorer people tend to get “marginalized spatially, both in terms of their residential locations and in terms of their activity spaces” (Knox and Pinch, 2010:70) and they suffer the most dangerous and polluted environment as well as the most restricted mobility and the worst access to services (Hall, 2006). So, the concept of territorial justice is deeply related to improvement and enhancement of QOL.

Quality of urban life is becoming an important issue with increasing urban growth as the process of urbanization is accompanied by environmental degradation, cultural erosion and a number of social and economic problems. Harvey (2011:232) has rightly pointed out that “If we think about the likely qualities of life in the next century by projecting forward current trends in our cities, most commentators would
end up with a somewhat dystopian view”. Difference in quality of urban life is generally associated with spatial segregation, poverty, unemployment and lack of adequate social and physical infrastructure, crime, violence, homelessness and overcrowding. Negligence of increasing disparity in quality of life (QOL) may generate deep dissatisfaction and underlie episodes of social unrest and dysfunction.

Assessment of urban QOL is significant to assess intra-urban inequality in social and environmental qualities among various localities. This will help in identification of problems faced by localities so that policies and programmes may be taken up by the stakeholders. Enhancement of QOL is also an important requisite for urban development and competitiveness. It has been suggested that enhancing QOL should be a central objective in every city’s economic transition strategy since they have broad implications for patterns of regional migration and regional economic growth (Kemp et al., 1997). Increasing quality of urban life through increasing provision of urban amenities would enhance their competitiveness since they are increasingly expected to compete for economic activity with other cities and metropolitan regions throughout the world (Scott, 1998). Moreover, increasing quality of urban life has been perceived as a means to provide a physically, socially and economically sustainable city that provides employment, adequate services and resources equitably as well as harmonious and safe living environment to its residents.

All the above questions and propositions on residential pattern and QOL have never been asked and tested on the hill city of Aizawl. The city was founded as a military station in by the colonial military. It has grown tremendously in the post-Independence period from a small town with less than 7000 population in 1951 to a city with more than 3 lakh population in 2011. The increasing growth of Aizawl city collocates with the transformation of Mizo society from a highly egalitarian tribe to
an increasingly segmented primordial capitalist society. The city became an embodiment of the transformed society in which the division between affluence and poverty has been increasingly observed. With increasing scale of society, segmentation and heterogeneity have also been observed in the city.

Although much of our existing knowledge is based on studies related to western economies, culture and physical environment; any socio-spatial phenomena is a highly context bound issue. The observed residential pattern in the city and the underlying processes operating therein is expected to be different from the western context. This would help in the production of new knowledge, if any or the enrichment of existing knowledge on residential differentiation. Similarly, it would be fascinating to study for the first time about intra-urban inequality in QOL in the city.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

1. To identify residential pattern in Aizawl city with the help of factor analysis. This involves testing of the validity of the hypotheses of social area analysis as well as classical urban land-use models in Aizawl city.

2. To find out whether vertical pattern of residential differentiation exists or not in Aizawl city.

3. To identify dimensions of both objective and subjective QOL.

4. To measure and develop composite index of QOL in Aizawl city for ranking of all the 82 Local Councils in the city.
5. To identify localities with similar and dissimilar pattern of objective and subjective QOL. In other words, to find out the existence of spatial autocorrelation in objective and subjective QOL among different localities.

6. To measure the relationship between objective and subjective qualities of life.

7. To identify social areas of Aizawl city.

1.3 Hypotheses

Following the above objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

1. Residential differentiation in Aizawl city on the basis of socio-economic status is sectoral along the main transport route that follows the main Aizawl ridge in North-South direction.

2. Unlike industrialized and western cities, residential pattern in Aizawl city is not differentiated on the basis of family or demographic status and ethnicity.

3. Vertical pattern of residential differentiation is present in multi-storey buildings in Aizawl city.

4. Quality of life is higher in centrally located localities than in peripheral localities.

5. Localities with similar QOL clustered significantly for both objective and subjective qualities of life.

6. Higher the objective QOL indices, lower is the subjective QOL indices. In other words, there will be no significant positive relationship between objective QOL and subjective QOL.
1.4 Organization of the Study

The first chapter is an introduction of the study. It includes the significance of the study, the aims and objectives of the study, the hypotheses of the study as well as review of literatures.

The second chapter is about theoretical approaches and review of literatures. The chapter is broadly divided into two sections - the first section is discussion and review of existing theories and literatures on residential pattern while the second section concerns with concept and literatures on quality of life.

The third chapter deals with the methodology of the study. It consists of the whole concept of research design including sampling technique, determination of sample size, scheme of preparation of schedule and method of data collection. A detail description is also given on quantitative techniques like Factor Analysis, Principal Component Analysis, Cluster Analysis and measures of spatial autocorrelation like Global Moran’s I and Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA) all of which are employed in the study.

The fourth chapter is a general discussion on the physical and socio-economic characteristics of the study area. Important physical and socio-economic characteristics which could be linked up with the main themes of the study are described and analyzed. A detail analysis is also made on demographic growth of Aizawl city, land-use and land ownership as well as transportation network.

The fifth chapter deals with one of the main themes of the study - analysis of residential pattern in Aizawl city. This chapter is subdivided into two parts. The first
part is a factorial ecological study of horizontal pattern of residential differentiation while the second part is a study on vertical pattern of residential differentiation.

The sixth chapter is a study on quality of life (QOL) in Aizawl city. It includes identification of dimensions and indicators of QOL, development of composite indices of QOL with the help of principal component analysis as well as analysis of spatial autocorrelation on dimensions of QOL. In this chapter, social areas of Aizawl city are also identified with the help of cluster analysis.

The last chapter is conclusion and summary of major findings.