INTRODUCTION

Urban environment as a subject is paid increasing attention by geographers, sociologists, planners, and administrators. Central theme of the contemporary urban enquiry is to study as to how population organizes over the changing space in urban environment. The ecological approach of Chicago School developed during the first quarter of twentieth century provided theoretical understanding of social well-being and spatial organization within the city. The development of ecological models which has overwhelmed the whole United States has substantial impact on urban social geography. Later, the same approach were generally recognized as an important mode of enquiry to understand the spatial patterns of complex residential and social characteristics.

Sustainable development in the twenty first century, to a large extent will depend upon how cities and towns interact with the environment. The 'Earth Summit' Agenda 21st program of action will fail if the cities environmental agenda of pollution, inadequate sanitation, water supply and inaccessibility are not addressed. The theme of the conference Habitat-I and Habitat-II were sustainable human settlement in an urbanizing world and adequate shelter for all. Further, It has
also been emphasized, that it should be the primary duty of all citizens and the government to protect human beings, for whom houses are required to be provided and they must be saved from all sort of pollution, diseases and inaccessibility to their work place. Drinking water has dominated the conference held during last two decades and has remained a priority issue at the Habitat-II. The quality and quantity of water, the ease of obtaining it and removal of water wastes are important indicators of health.

World is steadily becoming more urban and India is not an exception. Urban centres of India are not aloof of the problems prevalent in urban areas of developing countries. As a matter of fact, India has been experiencing considerable growth in industrial and non-agricultural activities found in and around the urban centres of different hierarchical orders. And this process has attracted large number of rural migrants to major and medium urban centres.

The urban population in India has increased from seventeen per cent in 1950 to over twenty five per cent in 1991. And it is expected that it would become thirty five to forty per cent by 2001. As per United Nations projection forty five per cent people of India will live in urban area by 2025 AD.
Indian population has doubled since independence (1947) but the urban population has quadrupled. As a result, cities and towns have grown fast with deteriorating conditions of urban health and habitation. The multi-ferrous city planning authorities and municipal corporations have not been able to evolve an effective policy for urban development. They seem to have failed in creating a congenial environment both for living shelter and work place.

Rapid population growth combined with unsustainable growth of infra-structural network has made urban areas repositories of people unable to provide themselves with the minimum need for a decent existence. It is also assumed that the urbanization in India by 2010 AD. is bound to project a more gloomy picture unless a plan for its amelioration is framed right from now.

Keeping all the problems in view, it is assumed that whatever efforts may be made to curb the growth of urban population and if the environmental conditions can not be improved for over two hundred twenty million urban people of India then at least they have to be provided with basic necessities of drinking water, accessibility and other public facilities at minimal level. Hence the economic development and urban development are interrelated processes therefore
urbanization needs proper attention of the researchers and environmentalists. And it must not be an uncontrolled process of continuous urban degradation. It is further assumed that urbanization should be made sectorally and spatially balanced, so as to achieve the quality of living and environment maintained.

Urbanization trend in India show that the residential expansion is increasing fast and the quality of such an expansion is deteriorating simultaneously. The main objective of present study is to quantitatively analyze the planning effort for decent living. Here an attempt has been made to respond certain specific questions are: (i) how is the population organized over urban space? (ii) what are the bases of residential differentiation? (iii) what are the spatial patterns of the imbalances of basic amenities and social infrastructure? (iv) how these inequalities are related with the residential patterns and population characteristics? and (v) what are the principal residential dimensions and can a typology of residential area be developed? The author has tried to address the above mentioned queries in the context of Bhagalpur city.

Bhagalpur a deplorable city in the state of Bihar has been selected to assess the residential standard as well as quality of living in India. It will not be fair to say that Bhagalpur is a
representative city. And it is true, that a single city in a vast and varied country like India can not be fully representative. Bhagalpur has locational privileges of being almost in the middle of the agricultural estate of the north and industrial as well as mineral graved region of the south Bihar. In other words, symptoms of both the characteristics of north and south Bihar are found in the city. Secondly, towns below five hundred thousand population inhibiting over sixty per cent urban population of the country are more than six hundred in number. And the government is planning to develop such type of towns and cities with a view to minimize the burden of major metropolitan cities and to diversity the economic activities all over the country. Lastly, Bhagalpur has been selected because of the familiarity of the author with the city.

The main interest of this study is in the residential structure and the quality of habitat in which these patterns have developed. Since the evolution of residential structure and the quality of urban social environment which is the result of on going and over going processes of change and a continuous process of transformation in living conditions can only be interpreted historically and culturally. The first chapter traces the historical, demographic and economic expansion of the city. In the beginning, there is a brief description of the
location and general geographic features of the city. The second chapter is devoted to the description of urban morphological features, like urban land-use residential types and changing nature of urban shape and size. Then a brief outline of the basic concepts, review work and research methodology in dealt in chapter third. In the fourth chapter of the thesis the basic concern is with the way in which the quality of residential environment varies over the city space. The analysis of the result obtained from the factor analysis as regards the residential structure and spatial patterns of the livability in the city is discussed and an attempt to integrate various findings is made in the last.