CHAPTER III

URBANISATION, POPULATION GROWTH AND INFORMAL WORKERS IN CHENNAI CITY
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The present chapter aims at explaining the characteristics of the environment of informal workers in urban areas. Any inquiry on the urban informal workers is incomplete if sufficient attention is not paid to the aspects of urbanisation, population growth and migration.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation is a recent phenomenon and its development is widely discussed. Modern urbanisation is the child of industrialisation. It simply means that the term urban implies high density in population or a lot of people and a lot of business clustered into a small area. The urban areas are characterised by rapidity and fluidity of life, complex social organisations and specialisation of activities as compared to the rural areas.

The population in the entire world is on an increasing trend. According to Lester R. Brown "human population took two million years to reach one billion in 1830. The second billion came in a hundred years (1930), the third in thirty years (1960), and the fourth in fifteen years (1975). At the present rate of growth, the fifth billion will be reached in eleven years and the sixth billion in only nine years." This clearly shows the intensity of population growth. Population in the cities of the world increased from 600 million in 1950 to 2 billion in 1986. If this growth rate continues, more than half of the world population will reside in urban areas as compared to the 43 per cent at present.
Urbanisation and Urban Bias

The steady increase in the level of urbanisation reflects enormous changes in the nature and scale of economic activity. Urban growth is inextricably linked with economic growth. However, it is difficult to say which one is the cause. Generally, aggregate and per capita incomes are likely to be higher in more urbanised regions.

Cities are the centers of economic growth. Commerce and industry flourish in cities because of the economies of scale they offer. They "optimize the use of human and mechanical energy. They provide cheap but fast transportation, which is essential for productive labour markets. They facilitate diffusion of products, ideas, and human resources between urban, suburban and rural areas. The commerce and industry in urban areas attract the ancillary services needed to support them. Such interdependencies give urban areas a clear competitive advantage for industry and commerce. The efficiency inherent in urban areas results in higher productivity. In developing countries, urban areas produce three fifths of total Gross National Product with just one third of the population.

Cities are growing and they provide, on an average, greater social and economic benefits to their population. The higher capital investment results in urbanisation, which brings more health and social benefits. The same level of benefits could be achieved in rural areas only at far greater costs. The access to drinking water, sanitation, health services, and educational opportunities are much better in urban areas than in rural areas. While there is enormous prosperity in some parts of the city, there prevail severe social and economic inequities in the other part. Disparities
also increase among regions within the same city. Within cities, the disparities widen among the incomes of formal and informal workers.

Urban Growth in India

India is the seventh largest and second most populous country in the world. India has been traditionally having an agriculture-oriented economy but it has been slowly changing after it attained independence from alien rule. Various efforts made towards planning and economic development changed the people in the desired direction and decided tempo. With the expansion of industrialisation and commercialisation after independence, there has been a spurt in the growth of urban population in India.

The pattern of urbanisation in India is quite different from that of the industrialised countries in the west. The industrialisation of Europe and America and the consequent urbanisation has occurred as a result of a positive demand for labour from industry but in India it is the push factors of the rural areas where there is lack of employment and poverty. Moreover, unlike the west, the rapid increase of urbanisation and industrialisation did not reduce the proportionate share of the workers in agricultural sector.

More than three-fifths of the total population in India is living in rural areas predominantly dependent on the agricultural sector. But in absolute terms the urban population in India exceeds the total population of some of the countries like United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan.

The nature of growth in big metropolitan cities in India reveals its process of urbanisation at an increasing ebb due to its prematurity and leads to underdevelopment and dependency. Some of the features of these cities are exploitative to the rural migrants, increased volume of urban
unemployment and underemployment, a majority of the labour force being employed in the informal sector, sprouting of slums and its social and environmental consequences, unattainment of basic needs by the poor due to their lack of power, etc.

If urban population is growing faster than overall demographic variables, then it may be termed as uncontrollable urbanisation. If the growth rate of urban population at present continues to be the same, urban population will grow more than many times that of demographic variables. It becomes impossible for the urban authorities to manage day-to-day urban affairs due to the increase of population and its liabilities.

Among all the urban problems, housing is considered to be the severest. Housing shortage in cities is due to the high cost of building materials, increasing urbanisation and the failure of private sector building to keep pace with their requirements. All the urban centres in India face housing shortage, soaring rents, increasing land prices, etc.

Levels of Urbanisation

There are wide variations amongst the States and regions in the level of urbanisation. Union Territories of Delhi (92.73 per cent) and Chandigarh (93.63 per cent) are the most and Dadra and Nagar Haveli (8.47 per cent) the least urbanised in the country. Among the major states Maharashtra is the most urbanised with 38.73 percent of its population living in urban areas, followed by Gujarat (34.40 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (34.20 per cent).

Inter-State variation in the annual growth of urban population and urban-rural growth differential (URGD) is more revealing. Except in Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra, the URGD is lower in all other states during 1981-
91 than in 1971-81. Conspicuous deceleration in urban growth during 1981-91 has taken place in Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh.

**Urban Morphology**

The distribution of urban population by size and class of town is shown in Table 3-1. At the 1991 census, two-thirds of the country's urban population lived in Class-I cities with more than 1,00,000 population.

**Table 3-1. Distribution of urban population by size class of towns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Towns</th>
<th>Population Range</th>
<th>No. of Towns</th>
<th>Share of Urban Population (Per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1,00,000 &amp; above</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>65.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>50,000 to 99,999</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>10.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>20,000 to 49,999</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>13.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>10,000 to 19,999</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5,000 to 9,999</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>less than 5,000</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Classes</td>
<td>3,696</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1991.

Table 3.2 reveals the ranking of major cities on the basis of their population in India. About one-thirds of Urban India (71 million) lives in metropolitan cities (million plus). The number of such cities in India has increased from 1 in 1901 to 5 in 1951, to 23 in 1991. It is estimated that the number will go up to 40 by 2001. Out of the total increase in the country's urban population of 58 million between 1981 and 1991, 44 millions were added to Class I cities alone. 28 million persons were added in metropolitan cities.
The four-mega cities, namely Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi and Chennai, with a population of more than 5 million each in 1991, account for almost one-fourths of the population living in Class-I cities.

Table 3-2. Prominent Million-plus Cities of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population (in million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bombay (Mumbai)</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Madras (Chennai)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Figures are elicited from statistical outline of India, 2000-2001, Tata Services Ltd.

Urbanisation and Economic Growth

Urban areas are the engines of productivity and growth in India. This manifests in the increasing contribution of urban sector to national income. Table 3.3 shows the details of the estimated contribution of urban population to national income. Growth of employment (main workers) in urban India during 1981-91 was recorded at 38 percent as against 16 per cent in rural areas and 26.1 per cent in the country as a whole.

Table 3.3. Estimated Contribution of Urban Population to National Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Urban to total population</th>
<th>Estimated contribution to national income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Urbanisation in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu ranks third among the states in urbanization, next to Maharastra and Gujarat. While Tamil Nadu recorded the lowest rate of growth during the decade 1971-81 with 27.7 per cent as compared to the growth of Orissa (68.3 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (61.2 per cent) Haryana (59.2 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (56.1 per cent). The urban population in Tamil Nadu is growing continuously from 19.3 million in 1901 to 48.3 million in 1991. However, the share of urban population to total population is about 33 per cent as compared to the 24 per cent at the national level. Therefore every third member of the total population in Tamil Nadu is an urban.  

The analysis of urban population growth in Tamil Nadu has declined to 27.78 per cent in 1991 than the increase of 38.64 per cent of the urban population which lived in class I cities in 1981 and 57.74 per cent in 1971. The share of urban population in the other cities and towns of class II, III, IV, V and VI shows a continuously less and less share. The proportion of urban population in class I and class II cities account for a larger share in 1981 as compared to the previous census year 1971. All other class towns and cities have fewer shares in 1981. Otherwise it can be explained that the growth rate is negative. The slower growth of population might be due to the lower tempo of urban-rural migration. Moreover it may also be argued that the industrialisation during 1971-81 in Tamil Nadu was not capable of generating more employment opportunities. In Tamil Nadu 188 units out the total 245 numbers of agglomerations have only 24.82 per cent of total urban population. It is therefore clear that urban population concentration is more and more on the class I and class II cities.
The big puzzle which remains among policy makers even in 2000 AD is the problem of providing productive employment opportunities to the additional population in the rural areas. Otherwise, the differential features in terms of employment opportunities and earnings, civic amenities and public utilities between rural and urban areas persuade people to migrate even to the extreme slum conditions. Empirical evidences show that in major urban centers there is an enormous improvement in the status and earnings of migrant rural individual. Thus migration from rural areas will be continued in the forthcoming years; a further accentuation of the exodus of rural populace with the increase of population through natural growth would mean a tremendous addition to the backlog of unemployment and underemployment.

**Urbanisation in Chennai City**

Chennai was a fishing village at the time of British colonisation. Before that period, Chennai consisted of a few isolated settlements surrounded by agricultural lands. The British named the City as Madras, which was derived from 'Madrasapatanam'; a village existed in the east of the present George Town (Parrys). The White inhabited in and around the St. George Fort area and called it 'White Town'. Indians settled to the north of the fort and that was called 'Black Town'. The East India Company acquired Triplicane in 1672, besides George Town and Black Town. Tondiarpet, Purasawakkam and Egmore were added to the company in 1693. During 1708, the English enlarged their boundaries and acquired Chintadripet, Vepery, Pudukkuppam, Nungambakkam and Sathangad. Thereafter the British concentrated on strengthening the Fort and the area under their administration. The development of Madras area and the convulsive emergence of the colonies picked up momentum in 1873 during which one of
India's first railway lines from the city to Arakkonam was completed. Thus Madras grew in stages in both area and population.4

Chennai is the capital of Tamil Nadu and the fourth largest city in India. It stretches to more than 25 km. along the coast from Thiruvottiyur in north to Thiruvanmiyur in the south. It lies at about the middle of the eastern coast in latitude 13°4′ north and longitude 18°15 east.

During 16th century, the site was selected for the new trading post around the present Fort. St. George. This was the nucleus around which the city was developed. Even now the places surrounded by the Fort remain as the centre of all economic, commercial and political activities, besides providing residential site to about one-third of the people of Chennai Metropolitan Area (CMA).

Like Mumbai and Kolkatta, among the most 10 populous cities in the world, Chennai also served as a springboard for the British to penetrate into interior India. Today Chennai City has many prides of its own. Chennai City has one main harbour and another sub-harbour in Ennore that caters to more than one-fifth of the country's total exports and imports. The city links its rail routes to major cities of India and a vast hinterland. Chennai is the leading banking, commercial and financial center in south India. The Colonial administration was interested in developing the city only for their convenience and their personnel. Thus, even before independence, the increased commercial and trade activities boosted the growth of the city.

Historically, urbanisation and growth of the city occurred together. Chennai City has been increasing in size and population even from the British period. In simple terms, the process of urbanisation occurred in Chennai as
one of the spread-out pattern of human settlements. As a result of the increased spread of urbanisation and concentration of population in many parts of the city started bursting. The characteristics of urbanisation in cities (of underdeveloped countries) like Chennai are different from that of the industrialised cities in developed countries. According to Richard L. Meier, "It is the typical academic approach that investigators will discuss substance and delineate problems about which something is already known. This tendency is equally true of the analysis of urbanisation in India; the whole development is dependent upon not only identifying but also solving the crucial problems." Chennai City is not a planned city; hence it has its own problems. The city of Chennai faces the problem of over-urbanisation in the sense that urbanisation has not associated with improvements in the level of living or increase in the employment opportunities as it has in developed countries. In order to understand the transition process of urbanisation, it is necessary to analyse the growth of population over the years in Chennai City.

Growth of Population in Chennai City

The first reliable official census was conducted in 1871 throughout India on a uniform basis. Thereafter the census is being conducted regularly in every decade. Population data before the first census in 1881 are scant and less significant. The need for reliable estimates were realised by the British colonial administration merely for their convenience such as defence, collection of taxes, etc. The first census of Madras presidency was taken in 1836-37. Since then, a periodical stocktaking of people continued until the Imperial Census. The first was taken during the official year 1851-52 and
repeated in every quinquennial term, i.e., the second 1856-57; third, 1861-62; fourth 1866-67; and fifth 1871-72.

Table 3.4 shows Chandrasekar's estimation of population from 1639 to 1863. The sources of estimation of population and the mode of enumeration of all these years mentioned were not uniform and hence they are less reliable. According to the estimates of East India Company, the population of Chennai City in the year 1639 was 7,000 and it doubled within a period of four years due to the settlement of East India Company in the fishing village. The population again doubled from 19,000 in 1643 to 40,000 in 1670, within a period of 27 years. The population of Chennai City showed a continuous growth in all the estimates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Source of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1639</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>East India Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1643</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>East India Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Thomas Bowery in Countries Round the Bay of Bengal (1670)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1674</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Sir William Langhorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>4,00,000</td>
<td>Sir Joseph Hearne (Governor of Fort St. George)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>3,00,000</td>
<td>Col. Love in his Vestiges of old Madras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>4,67,051</td>
<td>Government of Madras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>10,00,000</td>
<td>Sir Charles Jr (Governor of Madras)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Stages of Development of Chennai City

In the beginning of the 17th Century, there were only a few hamlets with temples and churches. However, the foundations of the development of the city were laid in thirties of the 17th century. After the setting up of the East India Company, St. George Fort was constructed. It occupied an area of nearly 67 square kilometers and the British beautified only 16 hectares for
their habitation. To facilitate the trade with their mother country 'Chennai harbour' was constructed in 1886. Just north east of the George Town, three roads were constructed which connected the northern, western and southern parts of the city. Between 1856 and 1873, railway lines were also constructed in all these three directions.

Chennai City covered an area of 71 square kilometers since 1871 and the area remained the same until 1921. (See Table 3. 5) Important public buildings, structures and roads of Chennai City were constructed during this period. They constructed buildings along the coast of Bay of Bengal, besides High court and Moore market; Connemera public library had already existed. By 1923 the area of Chennai City increased to 73 square kilometers. The important developments that followed were the electrification of suburban metre gauge railway line from Beach to Tambaram in the southwest in 1931. This gave a fillip in the transportation facilities in the suburban areas and formed satellite towns around the city. The growth of residential suburbs, outside the city, was further stimulated by the rapid development of transport system. By 1941, Chennai City had the best of both the worlds-urban amenity and rural atmosphere.

The three decades from 1941 to 1971 witnessed a tremendous growth in the economic activity. The important developments included the establishment of a number of industries like The Ashok Leyland at Ennore (1948), Standard Motors at Vandalore (1950), The Integral Coach Factory at Perambur 1955, Industrial Estate at Guindy (1958), The Surgical Instruments Factory at Nandambakkam (1961), the Madras Refinery and Fertilizers at Manali c1969, the Heavy Vehicle Factory at Avadi (1964); T.V Sundaram
Group Industries-Wheels India (1982), Brakes India (1964) and Industrial Estate at Ambattur (1963). The expansion of harbour was also took place during this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Area in Square Km</th>
<th>Density or population per sq. km</th>
<th>Index of Growth of density</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Increase of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Absolute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,97,552</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>4,05,848</td>
<td>8296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>4,52,518</td>
<td>45670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>5,09,346</td>
<td>56828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5,18,660</td>
<td>9,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>5,26,911</td>
<td>6,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>6,47,230</td>
<td>1,20,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>7,77,481</td>
<td>1,30,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>14,16,056</td>
<td>6,38,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>17,29,141</td>
<td>3,13,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>19,100</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>24,69,213</td>
<td>7,40,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>32,66,034</td>
<td>7,97,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>22,077</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>38,22,011</td>
<td>5,55,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>24,231</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>42,16,268</td>
<td>3,94,257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1951, the boundary of the Chennai City was expanded to 129 square kilometers including Saidapet in the south west and Sembium in the North West. This period also contributed to the inclusion of residential areas like Ayanavaram, ShenoyNagar, Annanagar, Vadapalani, Ashoknagar, Besantnagar, Shastrinagar and Indiranagar. Thus the post independence period accelerated the growth of industries, transportation facilities and water and sewerage system, which subsequently increased the growth of population.
Migration

In addition to economic activity, demographic factors are also responsible for urban growth. Previously industrialisation sponsored rapid urban growth was largely fuelled by rural-to-urban migration. At present, however, the natural increase of the urban population is also as important as migration.

The Causes of Internal Migration

It is well established that the greater the gap in earnings between the native district and urban areas, the more are the chances of the working age adults to move. Cities offer a greater diversity of employment and hence a better change of re-employment in the event of a lay-off. This might render large cities more attractive to migrating workers.

Family and networks

It is observed that the migrants of Chennai City initially settle in ethnically similar neighbourhoods. Migration over short distances is much more common than inter state migration and migration from far away districts. Whether this reflects on the greater cost of moving further, lack of information about more remote alternative or less alienation in a nearby setting remains undetermined. Migration includes movement from rural to urban areas, intra-rural movement and inter-urban movements. In India, much of the internal migration is therefore within a district. Even rural-urban migrants often move residence over a short distance suggesting that commuting is not always an attractive or viable alternative. More detailed data for India suggest that migration alone contributed about 19 per cent of urban population growth from 1960 to 1980 while reclassification contributed a further 28 per cent (20 per cent from new towns alone). Wealth and capital market, family
strategies to contain risks, relative economic standing in the community, availability and quality of amenities, incidence of violence, disease or disasters, migration controls and incentives are some of the significant correlates of migration.

The growth of metropolitan cities in India depends heavily on in-migration. Regional dualism indicated that the larger the size of the geographical areas of a country, there is a wider scope for in-migration between regions due to differential natural resource endowments or the weaker economic and cultural linkages between the regions. It is the major convention that migration to cities has narrowed down the wage levels in the informal sector. In urban areas, there will always be more people than jobs if the unending flow continues from rural areas. The increased number of persons more than jobs will further increase the problem of unemployment. But in a democratic country, it is not a right policy to bring ban on migration to the cities. The reasons for migration to the cities are determined by a number of economic, social, cultural and other factors, which are difficult to predict.

The cities are the dream of the rural folk, to be there and to take part in the intense organism. The economically and socially weak, unskilled, semi-skilled, peasants and landless labourers and informal workers reach the city, and are automatically pushed into slums. The maximum of the population eventually living in slums are the victims of migration.

Factors of Migration

The cities provide opportunities to migrants in certain sectors especially warehousing, construction, housing, trade and commerce, servicing and service centres. They absorb most of the unskilled, semi-skilled
and low paid migrants from villages and small towns. Periodic floods and
droughts also drive rural populace into urban centers. It is argued that the
comparatively slow increase in the prices of agricultural commodities reduces
the agricultural income of the farmers. On the other hand, city dwellers avail
the facilities of subsidies and increased dearness allowances, encourage
more purchasing of non-agricultural products which discourages agricultural
investment.

Moreover, concentration of political power within cities favoured
urban over rural areas. This will increase migration. The flow of migrants
consisted of migrants in search of employment in industrial, transport,
commercial or service sector that have a growing prospect of urban
employment. A large part of the rural migrants are pushed into these cities
with the hope of higher income and employment, the remaining are expelled
from rural areas because of acute poverty and famine. The increased
migrants from rural to urban areas swell around the urban informal sector.
They perform as a reserved pool of labour that could be forced to accept the
iron wage. The fresh migrants have to suffer more disabilities as compared
to the settled. This influx thus creates a threat in the occupational category
within the urban life. The new migrants are unable to compete with the
already settled because of their inexperience, lack of skill and technology.
The fresh migrants do not get a roofed shelter in the beginning; as a result,
they share accommodation or live on pavements or put up temporary
structures on any land which they find available.
Migration and Social Change

The rural populations who migrate from villages or of rural origin and settle in urban areas adjust to an urban way of life. Urban society is heterogeneous with differing cultural and religious backgrounds and distinct occupational and social strata. There is insufficient level of social adaptation and community integration all the way due to 'rural to urban migration.'

It is the characteristic feature of migrants in Chennai City that they are more likely to employ in occupations, which require less skill, literacy and capital. It is estimated that there is little reverse migration or circular migration in Chennai City. Unlike the predictions of Lewis theory that the surplus labourers migrated from agricultural sector to Chennai City has not resulted in productive employment for them in urban areas. People migrate from rural areas with the hope of more chances of augmenting their incomes and thereby bettering their standard of life. After their migration, they have the opportunity to mingle with a fairly large number of persons with similar tastes and demands.

Growth of Slums and Informal Workers in Chennai City

The slums in Chennai City comprise the poor in city and the migrants from rural areas of Tamil Nadu. Nearly one-third of the population in Chennai City live in over-crowded slums. The available habitation is qualitatively sub-standard. Most of the slums in Chennai City are located on the banks of the Cooum River, Buckingham canal and the seashore areas. The poor living in these slums are the worst fed and worst dressed poor in the world.

The urban parasites, inclusive of owners of small and medium business establishments, contractors and elites make use of their sole living
out of exploiting the misery and the desire of the poor to make a living. They purchase goods and commodities at higher prices from retail shops and borrow money at exorbitant interest rates. Even the basic needs of life cost the poor more.

Most of the informal and slum-based enterprises use little of machineries and production is based on a slum system of animate sources of power, which will not multiply human effort. The petty traders and technical persons carry out business in their own residence; hence they do not calculate the possible rent in their business. The pattern of production in India provides goods, inclusive of food and services to support rich. Under such conditions, the prospects of an urban middle class or the poor in slums as lower and vulnerable sections will have little or no chance to raise the living standard. The urban elites composed of individuals holding some positions in the governmental, religious or other institutions of a larger society. At the opposite pole are the masses such as construction workers whose services are produced primarily for the elites' benefit. Even in Chennai, City some of the slums are known as 'Harijan Colony'; lower classes especially the outcaste groups live in separate slums.

The slum and non-slum people exhibit difference by means of environments and they follow an opposite way of life. The slum dwellers follow a sort of verbal communication and they follow a peculiar verbal language. Visuvathas Jaisingh quotes Spergel as "the lower class structure (in Slums) provides patterned solution or adaptation to such problems as broken families, chronic and seasonal employment, serious physical and mental illness, inadequate and crowded housing, limited studies and
minority group status... such value variations as serial mating, living for the
day and not planning for the future, trust in fate or luck to solve the
problems, emphasis often on preference to family work or school ties, on
obligations and rights stemming from the peer culture whether adolescent,
young, adult, male or female and "acting out" or externalising emotions,
often though aggressive verbal or physical behaviour in response to myriad
frustrating situations." The nature of crime in urban areas is divided into two
categories known as crime against property and crime against person.
Crimes like dacoit, robbery, house breaking, ordinary thefts and cheating
can be considered as crime against property and while murder, abduction
and kidnapping are known as crime against persons. However, it is not
right to claim that delinquents come simply from poor families or from slums
but it occurs in all walks of life and all classes of society. The delinquent
characters of children and adults in slums generally rise from the reason of
deficiencies such as living without any purpose and direction. Every year,
the statistics shows consistent rise in serious crimes.

There is a rise in belief among many city dwellers that increasing crimes
in cities are due to the law-abiding people in the slums. But it is to be noticed
that if the poor in cities are not getting substantial support from the
government for their betterment, the situation of crimes and frustrations in
cities will continue.

Children are highly valued in the slums because they support the
family income. According to Ficker and Graves "The children pay hardest for
the impoverishment of the parents. Ill-housed, poorly fed, ill-educated and
neglected children of poverty will become parents of another generation of
the dispossessed." Children and adults are subordinate to parents. The early marriage system inhibits the development or maturity of the couples.

The occupations of slum dwellers are informal or unorganized in nature like the unskilled workers, domestic-servants, shop assistants, rickshaw pullers, etc., have to depend upon places which are nearer to their work spot; generally within a radius of a few kilometers. The dwellers also serve the people living in the adjoining areas. The socio-economic conditions of the poor people are reflected in the type and form of housing. Average housing at a reasonable price is a far cry and poor people are forced to live in pavements or slums. Slums in residential areas of Chennai City have a sizeable number of servant-maids for domestic services since the middle and high income groups in the area require servant-maids to look after the home and their babies.

Slum dwellers are mostly drowned in debts. Some moneylenders and pawnbrokers charge exorbitant interest rates and the slum dwellers are ready to accept in order to purchase for their basic needs like food and cloth. The lenders keep a traditional way to extract money from the poor by providing them friendly ties. Some lenders compensate the risk involved by giving a low amount of debt with little or no risk at a high rate of interest. Middlemen play a significant role in every reaction and the price paid to any item includes the amount of commission also. The slum dwellers aspire for good things in life and are trained in a society that is interested in conspicuous consumption. But they have no means to attain them because of low level of income and saving, job irregularity, poor expertise in quality goods and the high cost of credit. They consume goods and services of poor
quality supplied by the unscrupulous merchants of the slum area and money lenders who charge an excessive interest rate. Their shopping habits and borrowing pattern insures their continued indebtedness. They have little hope of upgrading their place in the society. The slum dwellers are interested in consuming certain non-basic items generally consumed by the rich people (demonstration effect). Veblen termed this behaviour as conspicuous consumption which is the most desperate way to symbolise their social superiority.

The large sections of the people in big metropolitan cities like Chennai pursue a rural style of living and are unable and unwilling to modernise their standards and living habits. They follow non-scientific methods and traditional procedures are widely employed to treat illness.

The rising standard of living will be reflected in the increase of the per capita consumption of food, clothing, housing and other basic necessities. Not only that the living standard is partly reflected in the more diversified consumption basket but also in more services related to health, education, science, culture etc. The living conditions of the slum dwellers deteriorate substantially by self-inflicted wounds like alcoholism, smoking, chewing and other bad habits.

Chennai City has over 1450 slums where live nearly one-third of the city’s population. Slums occupy about 6 per cent of the city’s total area. The growth of slum dwellers in Chennai City is much faster than the growth of the population in Chennai City. The absolute number of population in the city increased considerably; however, the growth of slum population is staggering. The details of the growth of slum population in Chennai City is
shown in Table 3.6. The annual growth rate of slum population in 1961 is 7.4 per cent as compared to the 5 per cent growth rate of population. In all the census years the rate of growth of slum population is more than the growth rate of the population of the city. The share of slum population to the total population has been increasing. Table 3.7 shows the increase of slum families over many years. It is also the fact that the slum families are increasing more rapidly over the years. In 1985 there were more than 2.75 lakhs slum families in Chennai City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.6. Growth of slums in Chennai City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population (‘000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Growth Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slum Population (‘000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Growth Rate (per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slum Population as a per cent of total Population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Madras Urban Development Project-World Bank Appraisal Report 1977, Madras Urban Agglomeration (MUA) includes Chennai City and adjoining urbanising areas including municipal towns and townships within Madras Metropolitan Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.7. Increase of Slum Families in Chennai City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Projected population.

Growth of Urban Employment

The development objectives of both developing and developed countries include not only the increase of the volume of output produced but also to ensure better standards of life for the general population.
Employment is the major indicator of better standard of living. Every person of working age attached to any gainful employment is known as the employed. Unemployment or underemployment reduces the level of income of families and therefore can only attain a lower standard of living. Those persons who are not attached to any seasonal or non-seasonal occupation inside or outside the household for a year is also known as unemployed.

Many of the cities of India, primarily in the city of Chennai, additional employment opportunities have not caught up with the requirements. Disguised unemployment or underemployment is a phenomenon peculiar to the agricultural sector. But it is highly realised in the recent years that apart from agricultural sector disguised unemployment also exists in the urban industrial, commercial and tertiary sectors. The main cause of such a situation is due to the poor demand for labourers in the capital intensive technology (or in high productivity jobs) and a large part of the expanding labour force has to accept informal occupations and low productivity jobs like construction workers, bootblacks, lottery ticket sellers, hawkers, peddlers, cobblers, rickshaw pullers, etc. Their occupation is less profitable because of the overcrowding in their jobs, low income and disguisedly unemployed. The continuous absorption of family members in family-type and slum based enterprises could also increase disguised unemployment.

According to Nurkse, disguised unemployment is a state when "even with unchanged techniques of agriculture, a large part of the population engaged in agriculture could be relieved without reducing agricultural output. In technical terms, the marginal productivity of labour, over a wide range is
zero." Unemployment, underemployment and disguised unemployment do exist in most of the informal and slum based enterprises.

Among the total labour force in Chennai City only a small fraction of the labour force is engaged in formal sector. In the existing economic conditions slum dwellers in urban centres belong to the category of unskilled or semi skilled workers with insecure employment and inadequate wage for an occasional urban level of living, particularly for those with a large size of family and more dependents. According to Bose "under the conditions of limited growth or even of scarcer employment opportunities in modern companies, the people in the cities also have no other choice, being in cities as it is, than to seek support in other forms of economic activity."11

Unemployment also means failure to find employment, unproductive enough to keep the employee and his family above the poverty line. Henry Mayhew in 1851 differentiated good wage and bad wage under the basic concept of national minimum. The bare subsistence of remuneration is the rate of remuneration that will maintain not only the labourer himself but also, while working and also unable to work, support his family. It should also admit the care of the entire family, known as good wage. If the wage cannot perform the above it is termed as a bad wage. Almost all the labourers engaged in informal activities earn bad wages. Basically the terms like unemployment or labour surplus or disguised unemployment reflect the fact that in the less developed countries, the number of worthwhile job opportunities (can increment there in) is insufficient to the potential size of the labour force.12
Table 3. 8. shows the growth of organized sector employment in Chennai City. The growth of employment in private and public sector has shown a snail's pace of growth. The public sector gave employment to less than 50 thousand jobs for a period of 10 years. The private sector accommodated only about 6000 people in 10 years. Electricity, gas and water and total manufacturing recorded negative growth during the decade 1971-1981.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1981</th>
<th>Average annual growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>2,26,566</td>
<td>2,71,713</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>93,642</td>
<td>99,728</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total manufacturing</td>
<td>67,334</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>-1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water</td>
<td>11,755</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>12,558</td>
<td>14,642</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service excluding transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>1.43,567</td>
<td>1.72,854</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
<td>84,825</td>
<td>1,12,445</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3. 9 shows the growth of labour force in Chennai city. The total labour force increased nearly two fold from 1951 to 1981. It is expected in another two decades since 1981, the population will double itself again. Even then the proportion of total labour force out of the total population will remain more or less stagnant.

However, the total working population out of the total population decreased to 31.16 in 1951 as compared to 28.18 in 1971. The backlogs of jobs are also increasing gradually since 1951. No country can afford to keep
a substantial proportion of the population idle and to feed a number of mouths without providing any work.

According to Hoselitz "the economic development of cities in India shows the following economic features. Urban industry is less developed and is characterised by a large number of small scale and cottage type enterprises. The urban labour force, therefore, is made up of a smaller proportion of industrial workers and a large proportion of miscellaneous, menial unskilled services; urban labour market is fractionalised and composed of mutual non-competing groups thus impending optimum allocation of resources and preventing an upward social mobility in the amount of unemployment."

Table 3.9. Labour Force in Chennai City, 1951-2001 (in lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>14.16</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>24.69</td>
<td>32.66</td>
<td>45.12</td>
<td>62.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total labour force</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>14.61</td>
<td>20.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in labour force</td>
<td>(31.16)</td>
<td>(30.59)</td>
<td>(31.63)</td>
<td>(32.42)</td>
<td>(32.68)</td>
<td>(32.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total working</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>12.36</td>
<td>17.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>(31.16)</td>
<td>(30.59)</td>
<td>(28.18)</td>
<td>(27.40)</td>
<td>(27.40)</td>
<td>(27.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in job</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backlog</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Same as in Table 3.8.

The rapid population growth in 1981 census and its implications on total rural labour force will remain more or less constant at 22 millions at each quinquenniums and this remained stable for the past two to three quinquenniums. But the net addition to the labour force will keep on increasing. The total urban labour force in 1981 is 13 millions. It is expected to increase to 14 millions in 1986.
The growth of large-scale informal sector represents a high level of underemployment and unemployment. In the opinion of Arthur Lewis "The whole range of casual jobs - the workers on the docks, the young men who rush forward asking to carry your bag as you appear in the garden, and the like. These occupations usually have a multiple of number than they need, each of them earning very small sums from occasional employment; frequently their number could be halved without reducing in this sector. Petty retail trading is also exactly of this type; it has enormously expanded in overpopulated economies; each trader only makes only a few sales; and if the number of stalls were greatly reduced, the consumers would not be worse off, they might be better off, since retail margin might fall." The employment in the formal sector is very low and the majority of the slum dwellers are engaged in the informal sector activities of various types.

Informal Workers in Chennai city

Not only that the growth of formal employment in Chennai City has been very low but also the gulf between formal and informal employment is growing very rapidly. There is no conceptual definition for informal sector and it remains a descriptive one. Any generalisation of the concept is "rather like those of the blind man describing an elephant." Informal sector is also defined on the basis of characteristics of employment as in the cases of entry of labour, low capital intensity in relation to labour and low scale operations in terms of employment.

Chennai City accommodates a significant number of people engaged in manufacturing, commercial, administrative and trade. On the other, a substantial share of the total labour force of the city is appallingly poor who
earn a living by different unbearable ways. One of the important reasons for such a state of affairs is due to an aberration, deviated from the main stream presumably caused by the colonial heritage of the city. By seeing the pattern, working conditions, and the lifestyle of the workers engaged in informal activities, generates the doubt that poverty is very much a part of their pattern and cannot easily be removed.

The third world cities like Chennai, as compared to the cities of developed countries, the labour market is not repetitive and they are very close to the structures and features. The persistence of continuing employment in the low income, low productivity jobs, those working in family concerns, and those self-employed, has been the empirical basis for a distinction between what has come to be labelled the informal and formal labour markets which are often seen as being separate, with little interrelationship. Unlike in organised sector, labourers are hired and fired casually for long hours on daily, hourly or piece-rate basis in informal sectors. Females and children are preferred because they are cheap and their temperament is very good. In many occupations men are substituted for machine subjected only to the benefits by workers willing to work in poor conditions for long hours with low wages. For example, transport by rickshaws, handcarts and head loads can replace motorised transport. Urban informal sector occupations are characterised by two features namely the wages of the workers are underpaid and wages or employment is not guaranteed. Informal sector has the major advantage that it is flexible and can accommodate a large amount of variation on standard production and distribution. “To an individual worker, employment in the unorganised sector
is an immediate blessing, however, dubious its value in the long-run. Therefore, in the absence of any alternative prospect of living, he cannot be expected to protest against its anomalies and exploitation.\textsuperscript{19}

In the informal sector enterprises, there is very little capital and the turn over of the working capital is frequent. However, income derived per person is less while it is very high per unit of capital. In an organised sector, an average capital worth Rs.12,000 is required to give employment to one labourer but in the unorganised sector 30 persons can be employed with the same amount of capital. In Chennai City, a large proportion of workers has been unable to find jobs except in the informal sector, in low productivity occupations which veil very high levels of unemployment.\textsuperscript{19} The sluggish growth of formal sector and rapid population growth make the growth of the informal sector apparent.

The occupational pattern of the people who live on the pavements, in slums, backyards of industrial complexes, educational institutions etc, and other nooks and corners of the city throws fascinating new light on the dark life and existence in the urban informal sector. With the progressive knowledge about poverty in the informal sector, it is evident that many facts of the picture of everyday survival and struggle for existence were left unnoticed. One of the escalating concerns of the urban informal sector is the specific involvement of women and children in some of the tedious activities like construction. In some cases, informal and formal sector employ workers with the similar skills and occupations but the wages paid to the workers in the informal sector are abnormally low. Moreover, the employers of the
informal sectors are benefited that their units also save capital considerably on overheads.

The occupational features performed by the people in slums require little or no skills but they are essential for the efficient functioning of the urban economy at its present level of technology and capital investment. If the government wants to replace them, it will require a huge amount of money and additional infrastructure. The workers in the unorganised sector are not only engaged in the regular human wants but also catering to further socially useful activities like recycling of the garbage. For example, people in slums are engaged in collections of items such as pieces of old cloths, paper, iron, plastics, etc, for reuse. Although social benefits of such activities are more, however, their market valuation seems extremely low. This is the asylum of last resort for those who have no alternative work that makes them search for garbage for long hours in the streets.

For understanding the nature of informal occupations, the conditions and nature of work of the washer folk can be examined. Washing or dhobi work falls into the informal activities dominated by the Dhobi caste. The job is predominantly done by the male workers but constantly supported by female folk. Urban informal workers include domestic servants, rickshaw pullers, cobbler, construction workers, fishermen and retail and small-scale vendors, traders, etc., each one faces separate problems.

Employment Opportunities

Unemployment is a significant problem in most cities in India. The formal economies are unable to absorb the enormous workers. Given the urbanisation rates, these cities are now experiencing the demand for new
jobs. Debate on the role of the so-called informal sector in national economies is rampant. Until recently, informal jobs have been viewed separately from the "real" economy of a city. Evidences suggest that informal jobs are well integrated and contribute directly to the urban economy and such informal jobs often have direct ties to a city's formal enterprises. The higher economic activities and urbanisation call for more construction jobs which are often supplied by the workers in the informal sector.

As a result, a substantial number of the urban poor make their living through subsistence activities or informal jobs especially construction work. These jobs run the gamut of providing services such as helper, mason, carpenter concrete workers, painter, electrician, plumber, etc. Informal jobs constitute an estimated 85 percent of the total urban employment in Chennai City.

Women involvement in the urban informal occupations are noteworthy. Sufficient number of employees in the informal sector are either children below the age of fifteen or old people. Many of those who are in the list of employed are a minority of regularly employed and majority of casually or occasionally employed. This clearly shows that the employment in the informal sector is an amalgam of irregular and regular activities. The form of women's participation may differ annually, seasonally and at different points in life cycle. The question is why such variations? Who is responsible? Informal sector has been a vital constituent of the urban milieu. Women's participation in a limited number of informal niches is hereditary. For instance, fisherman community largely does fishing and fish marketing. For them the activity represented one of the few available means for securing an
income in the urban area. Certain economic activities like domestic servants, helpers to construction workers, fish trade etc., are defined as ideologically natural for women. Female workers vary their occupation occasionally because they are the most worried people about their family poverty and they accept particular combination of activities like flower sales in the dawn and evening and helper to the masons in the day.

As far as the construction industry in urban area is concerned, women figure predominantly in activities like helpers to mason, mosaic work etc.,. The hypothetical predominance of such informal sector reveals that the owners and contractors substitute female labour force for male at less than the subsistence wage rate. At large, the demand for construction workers is a derived one and their demand depends upon the demand for housing.

**Housing Demand in Chennai City**

Housing is the prime requisite of human beings next to food and clothing. Housing plays an important role in the attitudes, health and efficiency of the labourer, which increase his productivity. Hence it is a kind of investment in the promotion of human resource development. In India housing facilities fall very short of social needs due to the scarcity of resources on the one hand and the rapid growth of population on the other hand.

Developed countries of the west invest 3.5 to 7.6 per cent of their GNP in their national housing stock every year as compared to India's investment of nearly 1 per cent. The share of housing accounted only one per cent in the First-plan and it hardly exceeded one per cent even after the sixth-plan. In a developing country like India the share of housing in the budget
should at least be 5 to 6 per cent. Employment in the building industry in a developing country like India should be at least 18 to 20 per cent; however, it is 5 per cent in India. This clearly shows that the actual investment in housing in India was found grossly inadequate to accommodate the backlog. The Draft Sixth Five-year plan estimated that 17 million households in the rural areas and 36 million households in the slums of urban areas require housing assistance.

The Table 3. 10. shows the comparison of shortage of housing in India with some selected countries.

Table 3. 10. Housing Shortage of India with Some other Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dwellings required (million units)</th>
<th>No required at the beginning of the period (million units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1961-82</td>
<td>28.62</td>
<td>18.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1969-75</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1960-80</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1962-80</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>1971-80</td>
<td>21.40</td>
<td>17.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for urban areas in India</td>
<td>1961-76</td>
<td>33.80</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From this Table it is clear that the shortage of houses increased to nearly five old forms 1961 to 1976. This only shows the requirements for the urban area alone. The shortfall of 33.80 million units in 1976 is a staggering figure.

In India the importance of housing is attached to the economic viability of a person and for this purpose the population is divided into four broad divisions namely economically weaker section, lower income, middle income and high-income group. But affordability largely depends upon the country's viability and the importance it attaches to housing. For example in
USSR, houses are constructed on the basis of the requirement of each citizen rather than the economic standing of the people or their salary. It is the common notion that most of the urban investment goes to benefit the most affluent sections of the urban community rather than the poor and the needy. In 1985, about 37 per cent of the 273 million people of India live below the level of subsistence and they were neglected from the provision of shelter.

It is estimated that at the beginning of seventh plan, the total housing shortage was estimated as 26 millions of which about 8 millions are in the urban area. In a developing country like India, at least 8 to 12 dwellings are to be constructed for every 1000 population for its minimum level every year. However, it records hardly 2 to 5 dwellings per thousand populations every year.

Adequate shelter has considerable influence on human standards of hygiene, comfort, social behaviour and satisfaction. It is the inherent right of every citizen to live in a home provided with sufficient physical and social infrastructure. One of the problems of Indian economy is its incapability to provide the provision of shelter to the poor and the less privileged section of our society, especially in big metropolitan cities because of its resource stringency and high level of investment in this less productive sector. This is the main reason for the spurt of slums and shanties without standard houses.

The finance available for the poor to construct their dwellings is at a high rate of interest for a small amount at a very small gestation period. Shelter is related to the game of snakes and ladder. Poor people are
affected by the snake side of the game like cost overruns, deficient and inefficient layouts; prodigal standards inter agency coordination problems, use or abuse of scarce materials and delays in allotments. The ladder side of the game facilitated the rich such as land banks, education in the minimum cost housing, optimum land utilisation, effective cost recovery, low-over-head cost, easy availability of loans, etc. Many housing policies for the poor advocated self-help housing. Nearly 80 percent of the cost structure of small house is absorbed by the materials and 15 per cent by skilled labour and only 5 per cent of the cost goes towards manual labour. Inflation and cost of materials cancel the idea of having a house of the poor into a mere dream. It is considered generally that the poorest of the poor live in slums, pavements, streets, and huge pipes or in semi permanent sites. People even defined a slum as the area of sub-standard housing. As far as the efforts made by the government on housing only facilitated the rich people. The cheapest housing units produced in the public or corporate sector are beyond the affordability of 35 to 40 per cent of the population.

For the low cost housing, the technology of area development, design and building construction should be with the availability of local materials and local skill at the minimum cost. "Over the years, the cost of construction of a house, whatever may be the dimensions, has gone up manifold. The price of land has shot up dizzily, the cost of materials and labour charges are escalating everyday. In this situation the economically weaker sections or low-income group people are incapable of exercising any option and authority over their housing and they are perforce to opt
standardised units. Otherwise building a house becomes a dream for
them.22

The available techniques and management of urban housing have
only facilitated the rich by large-scale constructions like hotels, flats etc. It is
necessary for the planners, engineers and architects to provide houses
massively for the poor, which require organisation of resources, technical
skill, materials and manpower. It is estimated that 36.8 per cent of the
population in Chennai City live in single rooms and the average number of
persons occupying was 4.35. The problems of housing in the city is mounting
and the backlog shows that it is impossible to achieve even the 50 per cent of
the yearly requirements.

No precise data on the shortage of housing in Chennai City was
available until 1961. In 1961, census figures that there were 3.51 lakhs
households and 2.78 lakhs dwelling units in 1.48 lakhs houses. Many of
them were Kutchta and were not suitable for housing. By 1971 census,
Chennai City had 3.8 lakhs residential houses of which 0.87 lakhs are
kutcha houses and the pucca houses about 0.55 lakhs (22 per cent) were
over 50 years old which can be considered as the normal life of residential
houses.23 The total number of households have increased by 2.27 lakhs
and 4.85 lakhs during 1971-2002 in Chennai City. This implies on an
average 22,700 to 33,500 dwelling units have to be provided per year
merely to meet the increased demand due to the population growth.

Housing problem in Chennai City is acute. The measure of
enforcement of Rent control Act has paid poor result, however, the difference
between economic and social rent has widened. The basic reason for the
GROWTH OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN CHENNAI CITY
failure is the inadequate supply of housing to the lower and middle-income group. Moreover, because of the Rent control act, there was in the cities and the landowners are not interested in constructing small or medium houses or not interested in the maintenance of rented building. It is one of the connotations that lack of investment in housing cum social overheads, then housing cost will rise in all the income groups and quality of urban services fall, thus restricting an in-migration into the city. Such a relatively steep urban cost of living limits the urban growth.

Construction Workers in Chennai City

Construction labour in Chennai is still unorganised, uncohesive, heterogeneous, and socio-economically backward and for the most part of the year remains underemployed. A vast majority of them lead their lives by socio-economic inequalities. Under this type of labour, employer in maintenance, alteration, repair and demolition of buildings employs workers. Due to this hazardous nature of work of construction labour, there is a necessity for a specific legislation regulating more effectively the employment, safety, health, welfare of workers in the construction and building activities.

In most of the cases, construction workers are working under the bondage of their employers. To avoid this uncertainty of wages as well as other facilities for the construction workers the Supreme Court of India laid down certain directions in the Asiad Construction Workers case. It states that the state is under a constitutional obligation to see any violation of fundamental rights of any person, particularly when he belongs to the weaker sections of the community and is unable to wage a legal battle against a strong and powerful opponent who is exploiting him. The Central
Government is therefore, bound to ensure observance of various social welfare measures and labour laws enacted by parliament for the purpose of securing to the workmen a life of basic human dignity in compliance with a directive principles of State Policy. This is constitutional obligation, which can be enforced against the Central Government and the state by way of writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution.

**Living Conditions of Construction Workers**

The living conditions of construction workers in unorganised sectors in Chennai City are very poor and inhuman as they are living in slums without any proper arrangement for lighting at night. These workers are living either in their own houses or in the huts, provided to them by their employers. Also these huts do not have the doors to protect the workers. The small pieces of waste material of building are put up on the doors of these huts of the construction labourers. Their workers are facing numerous problems in their day-to-day life. For instance, there are no proper arrangements for waste disposal, sewerage supply, environmental pollution, entertainment and recreation facilities, sickness facilities, non-availability of health, medical, education institutions, lack of good quality of food and nutritional level.

**Working Conditions of Construction Workers**

As regards working, the construction workers work in the open burning sun during summer, cold during winter, without adequate shelter and other basic amenities of life. Even adequate welfare and safety measures are not adopted intensely. Some of the children who come with their parents are not protected against bad weather and occupational hazards. They play near the places where the construction work of building is carried out. The
social security measures like payment of provident fund, gratuity, pension, safety precautions, compensation in case of accidents, etc. are also not provided to the construction labourers by their employment. The collective bargaining powers of these workers have also been found very poor as most of them are illiterate and are not affiliated with the trade unions. They work in remote areas without possessing adequate education and skill. All this proves that these workers are exploited, and work under disgraceful working and living conditions.

Bill on Construction Workers

A comprehensive Bill to safeguard the interest of construction workers was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. Introducing the bill, the then Labour Minister Bindeshwari Dubey said, despite the existing legislative measures in this regard, there is a necessity for a specific legislation, regulating more effectively the employment, safety, health, welfare of workers in the construction and building activities.

The legislation would have to be applied to every establishment, which employs or had employed on any day of the preceding 12 months, 50 or more building workers in any building or construction work.

It also empowered the setting up of advisory boards, expert committees, and enabling the state government to fix working hours and provision of facilities at construction sites.

Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board

In Tamil Nadu nearly 20 lakhs of workers are involved in various construction activities. Until recently, the construction workers' working and living conditions were not seriously considered. Therefore no welfare
scheme was implemented in favour of uplifting the working and living conditions of the construction workers. In 1982, the Government of Tamil Nadu in order to regulate the conditions of work of 55 types of employments which employ manual workers, enacted "The Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act," 1982.

Since, the employment in construction and maintenance of dams, roads or any other construction activity is one of the employments listed in item 10 of the schedule to the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Act of 1982. The Government of Tamil Nadu formulated a welfare scheme called "The Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Construction Workers) Welfare Scheme of 1994" in pursuance of the powers vested under section 3 of the 1982 Act for the welfare of the 36 categories of construction Workers.

The 1994 scheme covers a number of welfare schemes for the betterment of the construction workers. The important welfare measures under the scheme include: Crèches, Group Personal Accident Insurance Scheme, Provident Fund and Employees' State Insurance Scheme, Pension Scheme, Assistance for the funeral expenses on the death of a Registered manual Worker, Assistance for the education of the son or daughter of a registered manual worker, Assistance for delivery of a child by a registered women manual workers and Assistance for natural death of a registered manual worker.

The Government of Tamil Nadu notified an order and issued by the Labour and Employment Department that all the persons and agencies engaged in any construction work should pay 0.1 per cent of the total estimated cost of the proposed construction work, towards the manual
workers general welfare fund. In 1997, the Labour and Employment Department of Government of Tamil Nadu issued order for the enhancement of the contribution of the manual workers general welfare Fund from 0.1 per cent to 0.3 per cent. This contribution to the manual workers general welfare Fund is collected from the individuals and agencies at the time of the approval of the plans for the proposed construction. The contribution is also received from the Government Departments and its undertakings.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act 1982, in order to implement the scheme and monitoring funds successfully the Government of Tamil Nadu has constituted a Board called the "The Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board" in 1994.

The Board consists of employers and manual workers in equal number. The Board also includes representatives of the Government whose number does not exceed one third of the total numbers. The Commissioner of Labour is of the representatives who act as the Chairman of the Board.

Through the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board, a number of welfare schemes are made available to registered employees.

Group Personal Accident Insurance Scheme is one of the important measures in which all registered construction workers have been insured with the "United India Insurance Company Ltd.," under Group Personal Accident Insurance Scheme. In the event of death of a registered construction worker in an accident a sum of Rs. 1 lakh is paid to the nominee of the deceased. For the loss of limbs, eyes etc., compensation is paid up to Rs.1 lakh depending upon the percentage of loss. Assistance for the education of the son or daughter of a registered construction worker is given Rs.750 when
they pass the tenth standard and Rs.1000 when they pass the twelfth standard. This facility is extended only to two children of a registered construction worker. In addition to the above welfare schemes, from 2001 onwards, it has been proposed to give scholarships once in a year to the children of the registered construction worker.

Another scheme is that a sum of Rs.1000/- is paid to meet the marriage expense of a son or daughter of a registered construction worker. This assistance is given only twice. A sum of Rs.2000/- is paid towards Maternity (or) Termination of Pregnancy Assistance to a registered woman construction worker. This assistance is given only twice.

In the event of death (either natural or accident) of a registered construction worker, the nominees are paid a sum of Rs.2000/- to meet the funeral expenses. Further a sum of Rs.5000/- is paid to the nominees of registered construction worker who dies naturally.

Rigorous steps are taken for the introduction of provident fund and E.S.I. and Pension Schemes to the registered construction workers. In order to avail the welfare schemes offered by the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board, a worker involved in the construction activity should register himself with the Board. The registration fee is Rs.25/- The registration has to be renewed once in two years. The renewal fee is Rs.10/-. The registered construction worker is issued with an identity card free of cost at the time of registration. Till the end of 2002, 4,47,225 workers are registered with the Board. The poor participation of construction workers with Board is owing to their poor awareness and ignorance of the workers about the schemes.
END NOTES

7. Chennai City became the metropolis in 1941.
18. Nirmala Banajees, "Survival of the Poor" in Towards a Political Economic of Urbanisation in Third World Countries Edited by Helen I.Saka, ibid, p.185

