

## **Changing Residential Patterns and Ecological Problems in the Context of an Indian City**

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**ABSTRACT** Being one of the four metropolises in India, extending over 174 sq km, Chennai (Madras) has a population of nearly four million and a floating population of nearly one million. In the last ten years the city's population has grown at the rate of ten percent per year as a large influx of migrants from different districts in Tamil Nadu as well as from different parts of India come to the city mainly in search of employment and also for other social reasons. And in spite of setting up of CMDA (Chennai Metropolitan development Authority) as an ad hoc body in 1972 for an integrated development of Chennai and its neighbourhood still the city faces an acute shortage of housing. Taking advantage of the situation many agencies both private and public have gone on a land buying spree to construct multi-storey apartments even on a small patch of land where a single house stood. Apart from the above building constructed by different agencies, among the migrants who come to the city to earn living a majority of them encroach on government or private lands to put up huts for their dwellings. As a result a large number of residents are compelled to live in substandard housing as the quality of available housing stock is very poor. Overcrowding in dwelling units along with lack of minimum basic amenities with the houses built in the close proximity not allowing free air to get in cause health problems. Relative poverty, rapid growth of population, high cost of land and buildings affordability for housing but the changing residential patterns have created ecological problems in the city.