

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Chapter Introduction

In this Chapter, the scope of the study is discussed.

The discipline from which the study derives a volume of relationships and the various problems dealt with by the discipline are described.

The significance of the study is discussed along with its rationale.

The various factors which influence the perception of crowding and the manner of their influence is discussed. The factors chosen in this study for an investigation of their influence on the perception of crowding are put into a research perspective.

The content of each Chapter of this report is outlined.

#### Scope of the Study

The design of buildings and cities has an effect on the behaviour of the people who live and work in them. The arrangement of apartments, hallways, and exits in a housing complex can encourage the formation of friendships among neighbours and discourage the occurrence of crime. The

pattern of streets may promote their use as playgrounds in one neighbourhood and thoroughfares in another. The placement of chairs in a classroom can facilitate or inhibit class discussion.

With the background understanding that environments encourage behaviours with which they are congruent, the next step is to develop ways in which designers and architects can mould the environment to suit the needs of the people who are going to use them. Having this ultimate objective in view, this study investigates the impact of the physical and man-made environment on the socio-psychological processes in interior working environments. It derives a volume of concepts from the discipline of architectural psychology and environmental psychology. Environmental psychology has in the past dealt with problems such as: (a) the effect of the physical distance between houses on friendship formation; (b) the effect of furniture arrangement on social interaction; (c) effect of office interior design on social cohesion; (d) social and psychological consequences of overcrowding, and similar subjects. These are of interest to studies in man-environment relationships and the management of the environment for human institutions.

The physical environment of concern in this study consists of architectural and physical variables - such as

the nature and placing of partitions, the level of illumination, the level of social noise, the level of non-social noise, the shape of the room, the number of people seen through openings, the density of inhabitation, and the number of people inside an office room. These variables apply only to the interior environment, i.e. the environment inside a built space.

The socio **psych**ological processes referred to consist of certain dimensions derived from behavioural science construents such as the affiliative behaviour towards strangers and the social cohesion of working groups. Indeed, the processes are themselves items which form discrete parts of the environment. They are regarded as legitimate entities of the environment and the ends of behaviour are often studied for their relationship with such socio-psychological environments.

In this study, the perception of spatial inadequacy (the experience of crowding) is taken as the socio-psychological environment.

#### The Significance of the Study

The problem under consideration in this study assumes significance because of two important reasons.