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### **Ecological Footprint As A Tool For Planning**

The concept of Ecological Footprint (EF) developed over 25 years ago helps in developing a clear metric of the changing demands of the human on ecology. This helps in making comparisons between the demand on ecological resources and the available supply. EF has a wide variety of applications at various levels of planning. Due to its potential in representing all the factors of its concern in numerical terms under the same unit of 'global hectares', it acts as an efficient tool in communicating the global issues at local context and vice versa.

The various levels of planning which are addressed for Ecological Footprint Analysis (EFA) includes global, regional, block, metropolitan, institutional, household, and individual levels. Since the EF deals with the accounts of entire flow of resources at various levels, the availability of the data and the reliability on the source from which data is obtained remains always as a matter of concern.

At global and regional levels, the National Footprint Accounts (NFA) and Global Footprint Network conducts EFA and updates annually with the information regarding the ecological credits, debts and the current issues at the time. But when it comes to the other sub levels like national, block, metropolitan, institutional, household and individual levels, the methodologies and applications vary based on the questions raised and the parameters considered.

This study is conducted to formulate a framework to frame optimum methodologies to obtain context specific results in planning. The study is carried out in four phases where, Phase 1 deals with the background study on EF. Phase 2 deals with the finding and detailing of case studies at different planning levels to find the factors of further analysis. Phase 3 deals with the analysis and inference part to list out all the possible applications and categorize them on the basis of various levels of planning. And finally phase 4, deals with the formulation of a general framework that can be used to define methodology at any context and also, followed further by the formulation of a detailed framework to define methodologies to conduct EFA in spatial planning helping the planners to take context specific decisions more accurately.

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