

Urban Development Implications of Housing Reforms in Metropolitan Cities

A Case of Delhi, India

Sindhu S

Assistant Professor, BMS College of Architecture, Bull Temple Road, Bengaluru

Abstract - Housing plays one of the most important role in the socio-economic development of a nation, yet the housing sector has frequently faced enormous drawbacks due to lack of equitable access, drastic growth of population, frequent development intrusions, lack of inclusiveness, unchecked and unplanned development etc., all of these have resulted in negative impacts on the urban areas such as land crunch, inadequate housing infrastructure facilities and most importantly shortage of housing.

Though, India has made considerable attempts for resolving the housing issues through various housing reforms, there has been few positive impact on the housing sector, resulting in increased housing provisions, increased access to housing amenities such as quality sanitation, safe drinking water and electricity. Housing provision to a great extent has only been set by state polies and few interventions.

In this regard the metropolitan cities are said to be dynamic, contributing a large amount of investments on the economic growth. Nevertheless, constantly changing spatial and demographic growth behaviors of these cities poses challenges to foster sustainability and inclusivity in these areas. This paper focuses on examining the challenges and success story of India's oldest metropolitan city and administrative capital, Delhi in housing sector. Issues pertaining to Delhi's urban expansion, various measures and initiatives by the government bodies and the city authorities to adapt to the dynamic nature of the city and its sustenance.

Key Words: Economic growth, Housing stocks, Inclusivity, Sustainability

1.INTRODUCTION

Urbanization, one of the most important characteristics of the twentieth century, is an intense transformation in the processes of human settlement and their consequence [1]. Often leading to changing dynamics of cities, urbanization largely contributes to negative impact on urban areas such as environmental degradation, encroachment, vulnerability to calamities, socio economic change, climate change etc

India being one of the most rapidly urbanizing nation is now in line with the global trend towards surging urbanization. The Census of India 2011 reported that about 31 per cent of the Indian population approximately 380 million people lives in urban areas. This number is projected to increase to about 600 million by 2030 [2].

The dynamic nature of India's metropolitan cities act as basis for examining metamorphosis of urban areas, socio-economic and infrastructure development, land-use planning, civic amenities, and housing sectors.

1.1 Delhi City: An Overview

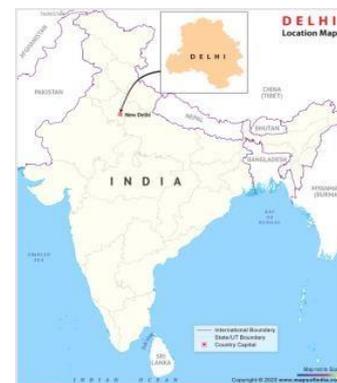


Fig -1: Delhi location in India map



Fig -2: Delhi District Map [3]

Delhi, the urban center and the capital territory of India. Consists of two components: Old Delhi, in the north, the historic city; and New Delhi, in the south [4]. Delhi today is emerging as one of the largest and most populated cities of the world. Delhi being located in close proximity to satellite towns, constituting of economic and industrial hubs as a result of which Delhi experiences a large influx of migration from various parts of the nation. According to the 2011 census Delhi city population was around 16 million [5] and the present estimated population is nearly 29 million [6]. The major driving force for the urban expansion of Delhi is this rapidly increasing population.

1.2 History and Morphological Evolution of Delhi

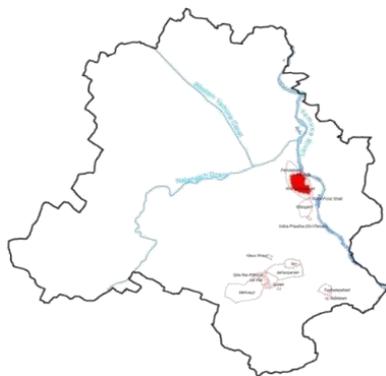


Fig -3: Mughal Period [7]

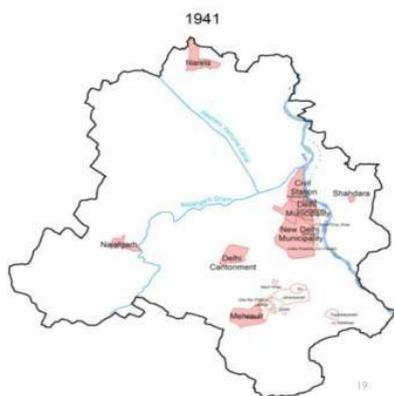


Fig -4: Colonial Period [7]



Fig -5: Post Independence [7]

In the historic past, developments in Delhi took place in a triangular patch of land with river Yamuna on one side and the northern range of Aravalli hills on the other two sides (UNESCO)

Delhi was once the capital of the Mughal Empire. In 1819, Delhi Territory divided city into Northern and Southern divisions (Political and Planning History of Delhi) led to the acquisition of large parcels of land and establishment of residential plots on East India Company's lands.

Colonial Delhi (Fig - 3) in 1912, The Colonial government set up the Town Planning Committee, resulting in the emergence of new neighborhoods in urban fringe, later called as 'Greater Delhi'. In 1936, Delhi Improvement Trust (DIT) was established for decongestion of Delhi, to develop industrial colony on outskirts facilitating the segregation of residential, commercial and industrial areas

Post-Colonial Delhi (Fig - 4) 1947 – 1951, Due to the partition post-Independence, the city experienced large intrusion of refugees resulting in the formation of new neighborhoods in the urban fringe. During 1950s Delhi was affected by the Jaundice epidemic which then led to the assessment of the city's urban condition resulting in the need for the Master Plan for the city. Thus in 1957, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was set up to foster safe and secure development [8].

1.3 Emerging Trends and Urbanization of Delhi

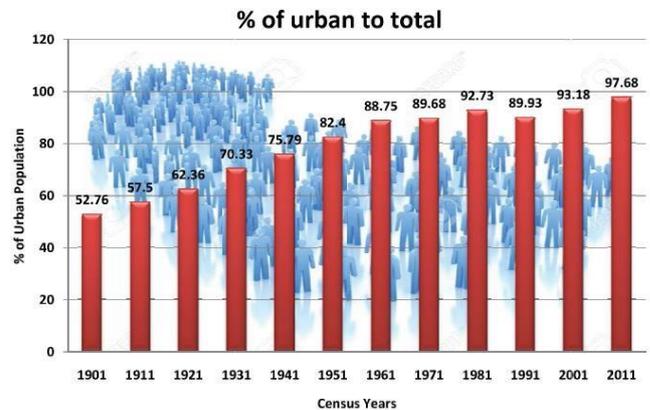


Chart 1: Urbanization Trend of Delhi during 1901-2011 [9]

Delhi has encountered rapid urbanization since 1900s from the time when it became the capital of India, the rate inflated drastically during the partition post Indian Independence which experienced a surge of refugee's influx. 90% of the population was living in urban area by 1991, compared to 57.5% in 1911(Chart 1).

This swift in urbanization has resulted in the unique character of the city with discrete types of settlements, categorized by the civic infrastructure, types of houses, pattern of settlement etc.

The types of settlements are - JJ resettlement colonies, Slum resettlement colonies, Refugee resettlement colonies,

Approved/planned colonies, unauthorized-regularized colonies, unauthorized colonies, urbanized villages, Notified slum areas, Rural villages etc [10]

2. Housing and Urban development in Delhi - Challenges

The prime concern in the planning and development process of Delhi is laid on housing and urban Development. Since Delhi has been thriving over a period of time dating back to historic time in spite of the various challenges faced by the city such as population growth, migration and availability of land. Housing stock has increased in Delhi over a period of time.

According to 2011 Census estimates, there are 33.41 lakh households residing in 31.76 lakh houses which clearly indicates the scarcity of housing. Out of the houses occupied, about 77.6% were used for residential purpose while others were used for commercial and for non-residential purposes (Census of India, 2011).

2.1 Housing Reforms in Delhi - Urban governance and planning

There has been considerable housing reforms in Delhi to cater to the housing needs of the city in terms of policies and housing development interventions. Few of the reforms include Jhuggi Jhopri Bastis/ Cluster development, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) for improvement of the shelters, Delhi development authority responsible for fostering housing development needs, Houses for weaker section by the scheme J.N.N.U.R.M and Housing for All-PMAY etc.

In this regard Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is one the important mile stone in housing reforms and has been a major driving force in housing sector of Delhi, which was set up in 1957 under the Delhi Development Act to facilitate ordered urban development and to counter the haphazard growth of Delhi. This included recognizing of new land that can be developed into residential properties and make self-contained colonies by providing ample commercial office and retail complexes as well.

DDA housing projects started off with the construction of houses, along with the provision of basic amenities from 1967 onwards, it is also in charge of Master Plan preparation and has been involved in development of various urban areas such as Patpar Ganj (East Delhi), Sarita Vihar (South West Delhi) and Vasant Kunj (South Delhi). The development, construction and maintenance of housing and housing infrastructure is taken care by the DDA.

There have been various schemes under this authority facilitating flats, owing to the land crunch multi storied development as a way forward it accommodates for the

different groups of the society. Until 2007, DDA has allotted a total of 3,67,724 flats, comprising of almost half the allotments to weaker sections of society and to those belonging to low-income groups [11]. Till Jan 2013, DDA had announced 44 housing registration schemes for the benefit of the people and has been successfully allotted the same. The housing schemes under the DDA involve construction of flats at various localities as per the land acquired to the flats are developed to cater to different groups of the society.

2.2 Housing project at Vasant Kunj by DDA



Fig -7: Mega Housing project Plan, Vasant Kunj [12]



Fig -8: View of Mega Housing project Plan [12]

Mega housing project by the DDA is located in Sector E, Pocket 1 at Vasant Kunj, Multi storied Apartment with a mixed use housing project. Comprises of 10,370 houses covers an area of 61.75 acres, it consists of LIG with 1bhk, MIG with 2bhk and HIG with 3 bhk apartments, a housing project initiative by the DDA accommodates various groups of the society coexistence and a development that has various other facilities such as school, shopping centres, parks and playing area making it a self- sustaining community development. Likewise various other projects have been executed by DDA under various schemes with a provision of subsidy for the lower income group of the society.

2.3 Future Housing Reforms by DDA

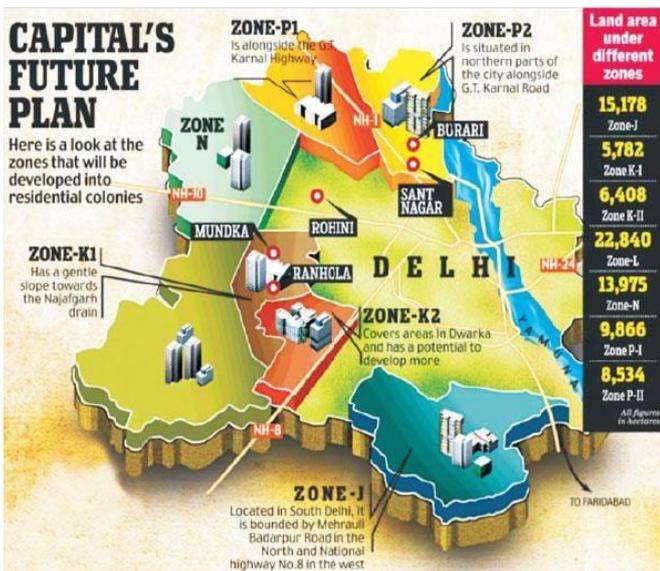


Fig -9: Future developmental blueprint for Delhi illustrating the designated zones for future growth [13]

In accordance with the 2011 Census, the National Capital Territory of Delhi recorded a total population of 167.9 lakhs, and this figure is projected to surge to 225 lakhs by the year 2021 [14]. In response to this anticipated population growth, a strategic initiative has been devised to foster the development of five new sub-cities through a unique approach of land pooling in peripheral villages that have been officially designated as urban areas. Unlike traditional methods of land acquisition, this innovative approach involves empowering landowners to take charge of the development process.

Under this framework, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will play a facilitative role by providing comprehensive guidelines and delineating the permissible uses for various zones within these new urban areas. Essentially, the outskirts of Delhi are envisioned to evolve into an urban extension of the city, with the landowners actively steering the course of development. This approach not only accommodates the burgeoning housing needs but also ensures a more participatory and decentralized development model.

The proposed housing development project goes beyond mere residential structures; it incorporates a holistic vision of infrastructural development. This includes the establishment of essential amenities such as schools, colleges, hospitals, and more, thereby shaping these new sub-cities into self-sufficient hubs. By doing so, the initiative aims to diminish the reliance on the core areas of Delhi, fostering a more balanced and distributed urban development.

Empowering landowners to actively contribute to the development process, coupled with well-defined guidelines, sets the stage for effective city expansion management. The

envisioned sub-cities are not just intended to be housing solutions but rather integrated communities, equipped to meet the diverse needs of the growing population on the outskirts of Delhi. This innovative approach strives to strike a balance between urban expansion and sustainable, inclusive development, heralding a new era in the evolution of Delhi's urban landscape.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Housing is a major economic contributor in India which has witnessed many changes due to the dynamic nature of urban areas. Delhi, the capital of country is a striving metropolitan city which has transformed over a period of time due to various development factors thrust upon it.

The demand and supply dynamics of housing in Delhi have been in a constant state of flux, encountering numerous challenges amidst the urban development process. Despite these challenges, the housing sector in Delhi has demonstrated resilience, experiencing continual growth facilitated by government reforms. A pivotal player in this scenario is the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which has played a crucial role in advancing housing development.

The DDA, operating for over five decades, has emerged as a driving force in Delhi's housing sector, acting as a major game-changer in addressing the city's housing needs. In the face of a burgeoning population and limited land availability, the DDA has played a crucial role in facilitating controlled and orderly development. It has addressed the housing crunch in the city without compromising the interests of economically weaker sections, implementing various schemes and subsidies.

Efficiently navigating the challenges posed by the scarcity of available land, the DDA has undertaken the construction of multi-storied flats under housing schemes. These initiatives not only provide essential housing but also incorporate a range of amenities and infrastructure facilities, contributing to the creation of self-sustaining community developments poised to meet the city's future needs.

The DDA's multifaceted role as a Provider, Facilitator, and Enabler has been instrumental in meeting the evolving housing needs in Delhi. Its adaptability to changing circumstances underscores its effectiveness, positioning it as one of the well-functioning development authorities in the country. The potentials exhibited by the DDA reflect a commitment to addressing the complex challenges of urban development and housing provision, making it an integral force in shaping Delhi's urban landscape over the years.

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BIOGRAPHIES



Sindhu S, an Architect and Habitat Designer, presently holds the position of Assistant Professor at BMS College of Architecture. Holds gold medal in M.Arch (Habitat Design) from Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belgaum. With over 7yrs of Academia and Industrial Experience, She is an avid learner and holds key interest in Urban Design and has participated and won awards in various Urban Design Competitions