

ON REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION PLAN

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Regional planning has assumed greater importance in promoting balanced development of exploding towns and metropolises in India as it facilitates quicker identification of socio-economic problems and their cost-effective solutions. This approach to planning has been applied to Delhi by launching National Capital Region (NCR) Plan for 2001 AD with two basic objectives, viz; (i) decongesation of Delhi Metropolis and (ii) promotion of balanced regional development.

The NCR plan, popularly known as the Regional Plan for 2001 was approved by the NCR Board in November, 1988 and put into operation from January, 1989. It covers 30,242 Square kilometers of land area. The distribution of the area under different constituents of NCR is specified in Table 1. This table is also presented in Map 1.

It is observed that the State of Haryana has the largest share in the total land area under NCR.

Table No. 1

Distribution of Land Area under different constituents of NCR.

NCR Constituents	Area (Sq. Kms)
1. Union Territory of Delhi	1,483
2. Haryana Sub Region comprising Faridabad, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Sonepat districts; Rewari and Bawal tehsils of Mahendragarh district and Panipat tehsil.	13,413
3. Uttar Pradesh Sub region comprising three districts namely Meerut, Ghaziabad and Bulandshahr	10,853
4. Rajasthan-six tehsils of Alwar district namely Alwar, Ramgarh, Behror, Mandawar, Kishangarh and Tijara	4,493
Total Area	30,242

#### SETTLEMENT SYSTEM

The 191.92 lakh population of the Region according to 1981 statistics is distributed over 6,667 villages and 94 urban areas. The policy measures proposed for the settlement of population are based on the need to control population in Delhi, encourage growth of DMA towns and check rural migration.

The measures proposed for achieving the above are:-

- (i) To develop a few selected areas intensively on priority basis.
- (ii) To evolve a four-tier hierarchical system of settlements consisting of regional centres, sub-regional centres, service centres and basic villages for judicious distribution of population.

Accordingly, the Priority Towns (Regional Centres) and their assigned population for 2001 are identified in Table 2.

Table No. 2  
Assigneded Population Among Priority Towns

Priority Towns (Regional Centres)	Population (in lakhs)
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Uttar Pradesh Sub-region	
1. Meerut	15.5
2. Hapur	4.5
3. Bulandshahr-Khurja complex	8.0
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Haryana sub-region	
4. Panipat	5.0
5. Rohtak	5.0
6. Palwal	3.0
7. Rewari	1.1
- Dharuhera	0.75
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Rajasthan Sub-region	
- Bhiwadi complex	1.14
8. Alwar	5.0

The sub-regional centres, the service centres and basic villages would be identified in the sub-regional plans.

In order to promote balanced development, the Regional Plan also proposes development of Priority Towns within a hierarchical system of settlements. It consists of four tiers based on the size of the settlement specified as under:

Tier	Population
1. Regional Centres (Priority Towns)	3.0 lakh and above
2. Sub-Regional Centre	0.5 - 3.0 lakh
3. Service Centres	10,000 - 50,000
4. Basic Villages	Less than 10,000

Urbanisation is rapidly increasing around the eastern and southern borders of National Capital Territory (formerly DUT). It is a part of the Delhi Metropolitan Area (DMA). It consists of the following six towns/capitals:

- (1) Ghaziabad-Loni
- (2) NOIDA
- (3) Faridabad
- (4) Gurgaon
- (5) Bahadurgarh
- (6) Kundli

It is proposed to curb the pace of urbanisation in Loni, NOIDA and Faridabad and shift the population to the other three towns, namely Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh and Kundli through induced developmental process.

The Regional Plan also proposes development of five counter magnet areas outside the boundary of NCR. These areas are specified as under:

- (1) Patiala in Punjab
- (2) Hissar in Haryana
- (3) Kota in Rajasthan
- (4) Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh
- (5) Bareily in Uttar Pradesh

It is expected that the aforementioned five counter-magnets would be able to prevent migration into NCR by acting as modern urban growth centres. Such an approach to planning is expected to promote balanced growth in the region.

However, the realisation of the two objectives, that is, decongestion of Delhi and balanced regional development, does not appear to be in sight because of endogenous and exogenous constraints. Some of the major endogenous and exogenous constraints are (i) inherent inconsistencies in the Plan, that is, lack of coordination between land use and transport planning,

(ii) rigidities in the system, that is, stickiness of business centres to the place of availability of market for their products and peoples' preference to stay in Delhi due to relative availability of subsidised facilities as compared to other neighbouring towns, (iii) lack of coordination among developmental and law-enforcing agencies, (iv) lack of political will for the effective implementation of the NCR Plan, (v) lack of resources and (vi) unrealistic perception of the Plan.

There are two major lacunae in the NCR Plan. It is based on an estimated population of 112 lakhs for Delhi by 2001 AD. This is gross-underestimation. It also fails to link the land use with transport planning, that is, interlinkages between household sector and work centres. On these two counts, the NCR Plan would remain on paper only and would not achieve the desired objectives.

#### POPULATION

The resident population in Delhi Union Territory (DUT) (natural growth + in-migration) has been growing at an annual compound rate of 4.3 per cent during the last four decades, that is, 1951-91. This growth rate was also recorded during 1981-91. According to 1991 census, resident population was 94 lakhs which was predicted about a decade back but it was disputed on the basis that it was too high projection. This was based on the plea that Delhi's second Master Plan and NCR Plan would be able to restrict population growth to about 90 lakhs by 1991. It is our estimate that Delhi's population would be about 145 lakhs by 2001 which we have been presenting in the seminars during the last decade. The same argument is being advanced that the two Plans would be able to restrict population growth to 128 lakhs by 2001. In our assessment, it is unrealistic perception. Besides, resident population, there is a major segment of floating population which makes heavy demand for transport, water, electricity, housing and medical treatment etc. This segment of population is estimated to be in the range of 10-15 percent of the resident population. The conservative estimate of floating population was 9.4 lakhs in 1991. It is expected that it would be 14.5 lakhs by 2001. If floating population is added to resident population it would give the size of effective population. The effective population was 103 lakhs (94 lakhs + 9.4 lakhs) in 1991. It would be around 159 lakhs by 2001.

Thus population perspective of NCR Plan and DDA's Second Master Plan for 2001 are highly unrealistic. It is not understood as to how the regional plan restricts the share of Delhi to 112 lakhs as against the original projection of 132 lakhs by expert group of the Government of India. The NCR Plan projection of population is, therefore, a gross under estimation. Delhi's Second Master Plan is also unrealistic.

It is not difficult to appreciate the impracticability of shifting socio-economic activities and consequently population from the metropolis to NCR towns and preventing immigration into the city of Delhi. In a mixed economy, the private sector would have its activity located at a place which maximises return/profit. It is, therefore, natural that the centre of activity remains close to the market. As regard public sector is concerned, sporadic efforts have been made in the recent past to shift corporate offices of a number of public sector undertakings which do not have justification to be in Delhi. But pressures from different interest groups have scuttled the move for shifting offices. It is also observed that in most of the cases where a person is posted in an adjacent town, he stays in Delhi and commutes to the place of work every day instead of staying near the place of work. This is because of availability of many facilities in Delhi which cannot be provided so quickly in the adjacent towns. It is suggested to develop self-contained work-cum-residential complexes in the NCR areas far off from each other and connect them by RTS. Besides, it is imperative to determine optimum levels of population for Delhi at different stages of its growth.

#### TRANSPORT PLANNING

As the transport holds the key to dispersal of population and economic activities among the priority towns by providing increasing mobility within the NCR, the Transport Planning aims at:

- (i) interconnection of regional centres among each other and with the capital by efficient and effective network system for free movement,
- (ii) provision of shortest and free movement network to interconnect the maximum traffic attracting and generating urban nodes in Region to diminish the centrality of Delhi,
- (iii) decongestion of Delhi roads and terminals by diverting the by-passable long distance through traffic,

(iv) integration of road and rail network system in Delhi, DMA and rest of the Region with appropriate interfacing facilities.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives of NCR transport policy, the following proposals have been envisaged:

- (a) three express ways (Super Highways) between (i) Faridabad-Noida-(ii) Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut and (iii) Sonipat - Panipat.
- (b) upgradation and widening of the national highways within NCR.
- (c) an outergrid to state highways linking Meerut, Bulandshahar, Khurja, Palwal, Rewari, Rohtak and Panipat with a link to Alwar.
- (d) an inter-grid of state highways connecting Hapur, Meerut, Sonipat, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Gurgaon and Faridabad.
- (e) regional rail bypass linking Meerut, Khurja, Palwal, Bhiwadi, Rewari, Rohtak and Panipat.

It appears that the objectives are unlikely to be realised. As specified earlier, Regional Plan is deficient in terms of interlinkages between household sector and work centres. In view of this, Delhi would continue to experience unprecedented growth of vehicle population causing clogging of traffic, high rates of pollution and accidents etc.

In order to improve transportation system in Delhi, following measures are suggested:

- (i) Exclusive bus lanes along the main arteries,
- (ii) Restricting entry of personalised vehicles into the CBDs during peak hours through imposition of heavy toll charges, high parking fees and creation of pedestrian plazas,
- (iii) Providing park and ride facilities, so that personalised vehicles can be parked on the outskirts and entry into CBDs made through public transport,
- (iv) Providing bye-passes so that inter-city traffic is diverted away from city centres,
- (v) Dispersal of distributive trade to the outskirts of the city.
- (vi) Making the Truck Terminals located outside the city limit effective. Likewise, ISBTs should be located on the outskirts of the city. Essential journeys connected with the affairs of the city, as distinct from trade and commercial activities required for catering to the requirements of regions beyond the horizons of the city, need only be performed from Truck Terminals / ISBTs. In other words, journeys for performing

essential work within the city and for transporting commodities for consumption within the city should only be performed from Truck Terminals/ISBTs. All other journey should bypass the city, as using the city as a thoroughfare needlessly adds to the load on transportation system of the city,

(vii) Ring Railways should be developed as an effective suburban passenger mode, (viii) Transfer facilities from Rail to bus transport should be provided at the rail terminals themselves and, preferably, single tickets for performing rail-cum-bus journey should be introduced.

#### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

In order to promote regional balanced development, following strategy has been proposed:

- (i) Development of new townships with a total population assigned to each within the overall population profile of NCR for 2001.
- (ii) The township would be located around the core economic activities and office complexes to be located out of Delhi.
- (iii) High order social and infrastructural facilities are to be developed in these townships and building of express ways, widening of national highways, laying of new railway lines and facilities for better telecommunication to be made an integral component of the development of these townships.
- (iv) Master Plan for each new integrated township is to be drawn up.
- (v) Establishment of implementing institutions like (1) Sub-regional Development Authority (2) NCR Development Finance Corporation, (3) Government of National Capital Territory in close collaboration with the participating states and (4) NCR Planning Board.

To supplement the funding of large scale development projects in the state sector, the options proposed are:

- Formation of Joint Stock Companies
- Creation of Revolving Fund by the member States
- Creation of Development Fund, and
- Participation of the private sector.

The above mentioned development strategy is unrealistic. The population as envisaged by the NCR Plan is likely to be far less than actual population in the NCR towns. Besides the new townships should be self-sufficient and far off from each other linked by MRTS.

The views expressed in this paper are of the authors and not necessarily of the organisations they represent.

As regards funding of development projects, utilization of funds requires higher weightage than mobilization of funds. It is not necessary to create too many institutions/authorities as proposed in the NCR Plan for the development of the region, as these would create more problems in the implementation of the Plan.

MAP 1  
SOURCE : NCRPB, Draft Regional Plan 2001 NCR.

