

Decentralization of Metropolitan Cities in Developing Countries with Special Reference to Delhi Metropolitan.

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Abstract

Metropolitisation and its processes in any area of the world is becoming more and more uncontrollable, and time will soon come when its growth become unmanageable. With the annual growth rates of 5 to 8 percent, the metropolises are approaching the point where they will be too big to contain the available financial, material and human resources. The present study intends to analyse the decentralization strategies adopted for Delhi Metropolitan.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of metropolitisation and regional disparities in the relevant countries development which are directly and casually linked with those dynamics have become a major feature of spatial structure while their consequences have become a serious development problem for third world countries.

The rapid growth of metropolises in developing countries is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of internal and external factors. On the one hand, the colonial powers started the processes of metropolitan growth by developing them into centres of political, military and economic activities, from which the exploitation of the periphery was controlled and organized via an infrastructural network radiating out from the metropolis. On the other hand, the strategy of increasing industrialisation adopted by almost all the newly independent developing countries, which was mostly centred on metropolises, accelerated the metropolitan growth process. The vast and varied labour market, advantageous proximity to the centres of political power, the favourable position in the country's overall communication system, and the extensive range of services available, most national and multinational companies decide to locate in the metropolises.

The development of metropolis and periphery are linked in a circular process of cause and effect. The metropolises absorbs the savings of communities in the periphery, consumes the major portion of country's financial resources and thus cause additional underdevelopment of the periphery. Peripheral underdevelopment in turn becomes a reason for migration to the city, thus boosting the population growth of the metropolis and underdevelopment of the periphery. More and more this process of mutual interaction is reaching a critical stage not only in periphery but in metropolis also.

Many developing countries have stepped up their regional planning and policy making effort. By creating non agricultural jobs in growth pole areas, it is hoped that the urban growth will be increased in various regions and the migration of people will be diverted away from large metropolises and into regional urban centres. Thus, it would be interesting to study how far such a regional decentralization is possible and how far it can succeed in checking the growth of the metropolis. This study attempts to do so for Delhi metropolis.

METROPOLISATION OF DELHI

Like world's developing countries and other metropolitan cities of India Delhi has also experienced and continues to experience extra-ordinary high urban growth rate. Its population has increased more than 55 times from 2.14 lakhs to 117.39 lakhs during a span of 110 years in between 1901 to 2011. This rapid growth of Delhi is more a result of in-migration from all over the country particularly from neighbouring countries than the natural growth of population. The major share of Delhi migrants was from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The Delhi buoyancy is primarily due to advantage of political, financial, commercial and administrative headquarters of the country. The preponderance of in-migration may be explained by the fact that during 1971 to 1981 about 66% increase in population was due to in-migration. The unprecedented growth of Delhi has given rise to host of urban problems like overcrowded dwellings, congested roads, inadequate utilities, badly maintained services & amenities, sprawling of squatter settlements and pollution etc.

It would not be out of place to mention that in recent years there has been a total hurdle in Delhi because of the Supreme Court decision to give relief to residents of Delhi because of the growing number of industries in residential areas and increasing number of vehicles during the post independence period. The problem of polluting industries and their relocation led to a new problem arising due mainly to the inter-revelry of political parties as well as Master Plan for Delhi. The crux of the problem is that appeasement has become a way of life certain politicians. They are also willing to compromise and sacrifice all principals only to earn political favour. That is why the ruling and opposition parties of Delhi are out to designate each-others stand in this respect. Ironically, there are many factions within the ruling party which are trying to run down each other for self gains. The issue to bring an end to pollution for the residents of Delhi was on prime importance, but unfortunately the infighting and mudslinging on each other either by political parties or individuals have thrown the pollution in back water instead of addressing it.

STRATEGIES ADOPTED FOR DECENRALISATION OF DELHI

There is a considerable divergence of views as to how the rapidly increasing problems of the fast growing metropolitan regions in almost every part of the world can be guided along desirable lines. Different strategies have been suggested in the past for restricting the growth of metropolitan areas. The idea of developing New Towns as a strategy of controlling the

metropolitan growth was propounded by Ebinizer Howard in 1890's in Britain. The regional plan based on the concept of New Towns as a measure to restrict the metropolitan growth was applied for London Metropolitan Region in 1940 with the publication of BARLOW REPORT and later in 1944 on premise of Abercrombie's Plan. This plan suggested that no new industry would be allowed, except in very special cases, pollution of the region as a whole would not rise and there would be a massive decentralization of jobs from central and inner districts to outer rings. Around the built-up area of London, it is advised the establishment of green-belt five miles wide to be maintained as open green area. Beyond the green belt half a million Londoners were to be housed in new towns and four lakhs by existing towns. This strategy was also adopted for Washington Metropolitan Region in 1961 and Washington Metropolitan Plan 2000 to create relatively compact, well planned sub-urban communities in the corridors radiating from the centre of the city.

Experiences with new towns strategy revealed many inherent drawbacks in it and it was found that new towns are not always effective in attracting population away from the central metropolis. Due to this, it is better to choose some existing towns inside or outside the metropolitan region and develop them and expand them to channelize the migrants flow away from the central metropolis. The growth nodes or urban centres could be in the form of small cities within the metropolitan cities or large cities as counter-magnet cities outside the metropolitan cities.

PLANNING FOR DELHI METROPOLITAN

As far as the planning for Delhi metropolitan is concerned the first ever plan to develop Delhi metropolis on regional basis was conceived as early as 1962, when the Master Plan for Delhi was prepared but it was never taken seriously. Although, the National Capital Region Plan was also prepared in 1973, but the progress of this planning was slowed down since there was no urgency about it. But, in 1981 when population projections of Delhi were belied from the projected figure of 50 lakhs to 57 lakhs, the infrastructural facilities posing problems and hence the idea of NCR was revived. At this time the NCR plan was taken with all its seriousness and NCR Planning Board was set up on June 1985.

The main strategy of NCR Plan is to keep within manageable limits both the population and area of urban Delhi through an integrated development of the region. The general principles envisaged for population concentration from Delhi metropolis to peripheral and other regional towns; selective dispersal of wholesale trade, administrative and other economic activities in region as a whole, restructuring the existing transport network within the region to inter-connect the regional towns, evolving a coordinated and integrated development of the regional utilities and services, development of agriculture and agro based industries in the region to sustain the population. Thus, the NCR plan aims at minimizing the inter-regional disparities by a selective approach of decentralization of offices and economic activities away from Delhi and provision for proper developmental opportunities in the region as a whole. The decentralization of economic activities towards the ring towns (Gurgoan, Faridabad, Noida & Ghaziabad) initially helped in minimizing the population pressure in Delhi metropolis but, with the passage of time these towns merged

with the metropolis and create the need for a more comprehensive regional approach for the planned development of Delhi.

The Regional Plan 2001 incorporates interrelated policy framework to achieve the desired decentralization of the Delhi metropolis. The NCR Planning Board Act 1985 empowers the board to select in consultation with the State Governments concerned, any urban centre outside the NCR having regard to its location, population and potential for growth to be developed as counter magnet urban centers to Delhi metropolis. A study has been carried out in this context by School of Planning & Architecture for NCR Planning Board to select the possible counter magnet urban centres to Delhi metropolis. As the major share of migrants to Delhi is from UP, Haryana, Punjab & MP the alternative growth centres to Delhi should be identified and developed in these states.

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